DIVINE

ESSAYS

OR

CONSIDERATIONS

ABOUT

Several Things in *Religion*

Of very deep and weighty Concernment, both in reference to the ſtate of the preſent Times, as alſo of the Truth it ſelf.

WITH

A Lamenting and Pleading *Poſtſcript*.

By Isaac Penington *(junior)* Eſq;.

The Darkneſs of Man (which his greateſt Light is) cannot comprehend the Light of God.

Be not haſty in thy heart, but read and conſider: and the Lord give thee a true eye, and open that eye for thee.

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The Preface.

Wonderfully great and deep are the motions and ſteps of God in all his ways! His bringing forth of the Creation and Man, his particular ordering of them, his aym and end concerning them, who can truly fathom! He muſt be as wiſe as the Lord himſelf, who fully underſtandeth him. But to let that paſs as unexpectable, Who can, after his own ſhallow manner, meaſure any of the ways or works of God from the beginning to the end? How far is the fooliſh ſpirit of man from any true knowledg of the Lord, and yet how bold is the ſpirit of man in undertaking to know and determine the will and counſels of the Lord, eſpecially if he can find any thing revealed from the Lord for his own underſtanding to bottom and work upon! How confident were the Jews in their day, and how confident is every ſeveral ſort of men in our day, Some in ſetting up their own apprehenſions from the Word as evident Truth which all are bound to ſubſcribe, Others in ſetting up their own meer imaginations above the light of the Word, not at all regarding whether they agree with it or contradict it.

Man muſt run his courſe, It is now his time, let him make

uſe of it. But yet for all that, Mans vanity is never the better or ſafer for his rivetting it into the Scriptures, Nor are the Scriptures ever the leſs honorable for his undervaluing them, or ever the leſs true for his contradicting them: Nor is God ever the leſs in himſelf, or man ever the greater in himſelf for his vilifying of God and magnifying of himſelf that ſo he might become equal with him. The greateſt change in the imagination, produceth not the leaſt change in the nature of things; but that proceeding from a deeper root, muſt fetch its riſe from a ſtronger influence.

I have brought forth ſomewhat here for the good of ſome unto whom I wiſh well, which though it intend kindneſs, may for its reward meet with hardſhip: Both the root and the fruit may ſuffer undeſervedly on each hand. Thoſe who are wedded to that which they underſtand not, will not be able to receive it; and thoſe who are looſe from all bonds, can hardly be drawn to beleeve any yoke ſo eaſie or neceſſary, as to be willing to put their necks under it.

What ſhall I ſay? When ſhall the work of vain man come to an end! When ſhall his ſpirit be truly broken! His breakings hitherto, tend but to faſten him more, and make him take deeper root. O how mad is man grown now adays through the depth of his wiſdom! What a ſtrange peace, ſecurity and liberty hath he found out for himſelf! He hath built up ſuch a wall of defence now, as there is no battering of. But if his eye be ſick, If the light in him be darkneſs, how thick that darkneſs is, and whither it will lead him; that which is ſound and perfect can alone diſcern; but for his part, he is not capable of perceiving any thing truly in his diſtemper. Yet this calamity is common in this empty ſtate of man, He that is moſt diſtempered is moſt prone to judge, even the greateſt things, with the greateſt confidence. Whom ſhall we find more confident then him, who is moſt deeply, groſly and palpably deceived in his very ground-work?

I have not here ventured upon a vain or over-difficult task in the nature of things, but only in reference to the condition of persons, which being not universal, it may somewhere prove serviceable and beneficial, which will be recompence sufficient to this undertaking, and satisfaction enough to my spirit at present in this respect.

Divine

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Robert Aislabies
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Divine Essayes.

I. *Of Knowledge in Generall.*

THere are several kinds of *Knowledg*, which may be distinguished according to the *Nature of the things* which are to be known, according to the *diversity of the subject* which is capable of knowledg, and according to the *various wayes of knowing* or receiving in of knowledg.

There is a *natural* knowledg, there is a *spiritual* knowledg, and there is a *divine* knowledg; as there are natural things and spiritual things and divine things to be known.

There is a knowledge of *sense* (if that may deserve the name of knowledg) in common creatures, a knowledg of *reason* in the natural man, a knowledg of the *spirit* in the spiritual man (for in the renewed man there is a renewed spirit, which hath a knowledg sutable to it self) and a knowledg of *God* in the Godhead: God having a *knowledg* in himself as well as a *life, love, wisdom, power,* sutable to himself.

Again, there is a *ſpeculative* knowledg, and an *Experimental* knowledg: a knowledg by underſtanding, and a knowledg by experience: a knowledg by viewing the thing, and a knowledg by trying the thing. This experimental knowledg is the better kind of knowledg in this uncertain ſtate wherein we are, but the other is the better in its own nature. It is better by vertue of a cleer underſtanding to ſearch into the nature of things, then to ſeek out an experiment of them from ſenſe, what can the judgment of ſenſe add to the underſtanding? or what a poor underſtanding is that which needeth to be helped by the judgment of ſenſe? He who truly knoweth (who truly comprehendeth in his underſtanding) needeth not to experiment: He who goeth about to experiment, diſcovereth the inſufficiency of his underſtanding.

Now there is a double way of knowing in every kind, a double way of receiving in all ſorts of knowledg either of ſpeculation or experience. The one is *by aſcending*, The other is *by deſcending*. There is ariſing up into the knowledg of things, and there is a going down into the knowledg of things, according to the ſtate and degree of the perſon which ſeeketh gaineth or exerciſeth knowledg.

There is a knowing of God, Chriſt, and all ſpiritual things by natural things, and there is a knowing of natural things by ſpiritual things. There is a learning of God out of the Creatures and ſcriptures, and there is a learning of the Creatures and ſcriptures out of God. There is a ſeeing and diſcovering of God in the Creatures, a knowing of him as he appeareth there, as our eye can diſcern him there, as our heart by experimenting can ſearch him out there. There is alſo a ſeeing and diſcovering of the Creature in God; its original, its riſe, its progreſs, its preſent ſtation, motion, end, is there to be diſcerned.

This

This is the excellent kind of knowledg indeed. This is true knowledg, This is ful knowledg, This is certain knowledg, This is perfect knowledg, This is satisfactory knowledg. The other is weak, dark, deceitful *&c.* and yet that is our only way of knowledg at this present: We have ladders let down to us to ascend up into the Mount by, And so high as we get upon the rundles of those ladders, so far we see into things in the Mount, into things that are above both inrespect of there nature and scituation: but we cannot get into the Mount to look perfectly upon things there, or to look down from thence upon things here below: and therefore we do but slightly, not throughly, know either the one or the other.

Speculative knowledg is not to be wholly condemned, it having a necessary use in this our present state, (for we have need of more knowledg in every kind then we can possibly experiment) besides its nature which far exceleth the other. There is an head in man, There is an eye in his understanding, which is made to be espying out the nature of things. Yet speculative knowledg alone without practise, without trial, without experience, is not altogether so safe in this state of man: His eye being weak needeth this further help, or he may easily be deceived. His head and his heart must go together, yea and both must be rightly guided, or he will be apt to mistake and miscary in every thing.

Miserable is the condition of man without knowledg, without that particular knowledg which his estate and relation calleth for. *The wise man hath his eyes in his head, but the fool walks in darkneß.* The motions of the wise man are understanding and orderly, in his own dispensation; He knows where he is, what he does, whether his motions tend: but the fool runs on, either howling or dancing, in the path of misery. The wise man hath goverment of himself, and gaineth by every thing:

He gains inſtructions out of his loſſes, and maketh uſe of his oppertunities and advantages: He ſaileth on apace with a fair wind, and maketh the beſt of a contrary wind: But the fool knoweth neither how to bear a croſs, no nor yet to make uſe of a fair advantage. The wiſe man in every eſtate condition and degree, is a kind of God for the fool to honour worſhip and ſerve: And it is his greateſt happineſs ſo to do; for that is the only means to preſerve him from the undoing of himſelf, which his own folly leadeth him unto. There is no valuing of knowledg in any kind, its price is ſo great.

And yet, in ſome ſenſe, ignorance is better then knowledg. Man hath ſtill eaten too much of *the tree of knowledg*, and he muſt vomit up all this fruit again. It is good for man to have ſeaſons of vanity paſs over him. It is better to be filled with wind, then to be quite empty: and yet again, It is better to be emptied of that wind, then to remain full of it. Plainly thus, It is better in reference to this preſent eſtate of man, to be full of knowledg or to be filing with knowledg then to be empty or to be emptying: A ſtate of utter darkneſs, (to be without the light of God, without the light of the Creature; without the light of reaſon, without the light of Religion) is extreamly tirrible to man: But yet in reference to a future eſtate, it is better to be empty or to be emptying (to be caſting into darkneſs or to be lying in darkneſs) then to be ful. That miſery, ſeeming miſery (in a ſenſe true miſery) which leadeth to true happineſs, is a far better condition then that happineſs, ſeeming happineſs (in a ſenſe true happineſs) which leadeth to true miſery.

of

II. *Of Scripture-Knowledge.*

The *Scriptures* treat of two *principles*, and *ſeeds* from them, whoſe *nature, growth, courſe, and end* is the ſum of Scripture knowledg. But what was before theſe, what ſhall be after theſe, nor what theſe themſelves are in their root, the Scripture undertaketh not to declare.

The *roots* or *principles* which the Scripture mentioneth, are *God* and the *Devil*. God who is light and truth, and from and in whom is light and truth; and the Devil who is darkneſs and a lye and from and in whom is darkneſs and a lye: He is *the father* of it. A lye hath its original from the Devil as its principal, as truth hath from God. From the one proceedeth all that is good, from the other all that is evil.

The ſeeds are the natures and vertues of each of theſe roots, which they ſow in one and the ſame ſubject, in in one and the ſame Earth, in one and the ſame *Adam*. Firſt God bringeth forth his Image, his light in him; then the Divil draweth his Image, his darkneſs over him.

And thus as it was at the firſt, ſo hath it been in all diſpenſations ſince: Firſt God bringeth forth his light, and then the Divil draweth his cloud over it, wrapping it up in darkneſs. Thus every diſpenſation of light, either to the natural ſeed or to the ſpiritual ſeed, which as yet hath been brought forth, hath been overtaken and overcom by darkneſs.

Darkneſs brought forth light, or rather darkneſs was the womb out of which light ſprang and was brought forth: Light being brought forth excludeth darkneſs: Darkneſs, being excluded, groweth angry and overcometh light: Light, being overcome, becommeth

freinds again with darkneſs. But where, what is that light; where, what is that darkneſs, which cannot differ between themſelves, nor be overcom by each other?

The eſtate and condition of theſe two ſeeds, is all along Hierogliphically expreſſed in Scripture, as in *Cain* and *Abel*, *Iſaac* and *Iſhmael*, *Eſau* and *Iacob*, the *Jews* and *Gentiles*, the *Gentiles* again a *ſpiritual ſeed* and the Jews or *natural ſeed*: for none of theſe were the truth it ſelf, but ſeveral ſhadows and repreſentations of it, under which the truth lay, and through which it did ſometimes a little ſtart up and peep forth. *Adam* was not the humanity but an Hierogliphick of it, his body was not the body nor his Spirit the Spirit, but an Hierogliphick of each: and the poor weak ſhadow in coming forth is loſt, but the ſubſtance, being ſafe, recovereth its ſhaddow again.

The great *Lord* hath his *ſtay*, and his *Comedies* and *Tragedies*, with there ſeveral *Acts* and *Scenes*. He bringeth forth his great principle of good and his great principle of evil; and theſe have Powers and opperations and circuits ſutable to themſelves, and ſutable to him whoſe they are, and they act their part in all their limits upon this ſtay. Now of this the Scriptures treat, bringing forth firſt *God*, the principle of light, with his Creation, then *Satan*, the principle of darkneſs with his deſtruction, and ſo the ſeed of both and the conteſt of both to the end, with the ſeveral ſalvations and deſtructions appertaining to each.

Now mark, *God* hath two ſeeds, the *natural* the *ſpiritual*, the *outward* the *inward*, the *humanity* the *divinity*. Both theſe were ſown in *Adam*, Both theſe were covered with darkneſs, Both theſe are recovered and reſtored by that which is the ſubſtance of each, neither whereof was in *Adam* but only the Image, and that a natural one too,

for

for the ſpiritual was reſerved for *Chriſt* in whom the ſubſtance was to dwell. He was an heavenly man in his make and production, as an *Adam* was an earthly.

This was again written over in *Abraham*, through whom God produceth and embraceth both the ſeeds, both the natural and the ſpiritual, yet ſuffereth them both to go into their proper *Egypts*, to go into Captivity, to be ſlaves, to be in bondage in the land of darkneſs, and thence again he redeemeth them by his own out-ſtretched Arm, by the ſubſtance of his own life and Power: *out of Egypt have I called my Son.*

Anſwerably the *Devil* hath two ſeeds (he hath a ſpiritual aud a fleſhly ſeed, as well as a ſpiritual and fleſhly wickedneſs) which he hath ſown every where throughout the whole Creation; and it is the meeting of theſe with the ſeeds of God which maketh ſuch Earthquakes (their very natures oppoſing, claſhing and fighting like fire and water) and there will never be any quietneſs till both be taken into their places.

Theſe ſeeds, I mean each of darkneſs and each of light, (for there is the outward and inward ſeed of both) are the one of them the wicked, the ungodly, the ſinners, the children of darkneſs, whoſe principle is darkneſs, whoſe eſtate is darkneſs, whoſe courſe is darkneſs, and whoſe end is death and deſtruction: And the other are holy, righteous, the children of light, whoſe principle, eſtate, courſe, and end, is life and ſalvation. And this is it which was pointed at in all the ſhadows which were choſen to ſignifie it in the Scriptures.

The different conſtitution and condition of theſe ſeeds is ſuch, that the one thriveth and flouriſheth in his ſin and wickedneſs, the other fainteth and almoſt periſheth in his righteouſneſs, only he hath ſomewhat in hopes, ſomewhat to hope for in the end (which to the other is diſmal) *Mark the perfect man, and behold the upright; the end of that man is peace.*

There

There is one thing further which would be well observed, or it may occasion great mistakes, which is this; God though he be light, yet he hath his proper darkness wherewith he covereth himself (*he clouds himself with thick darkness*) and so he doth also his seed: And the Devil though he be the principle of darkness, yet he hath also his light wherewith he clothes himself and his off-spring. But this darkness of God and his seed is light in the root, and the light of the Divil and his off-spring is darkness in the root.

There is a mighty mistery in this, in Gods excercising each of his seeds towards salvation under that which cannot save them, and yet both think they are in the direct and certain path of salvation under each. Thus did the *Jews* or natural seed in their day, and thus did the *Gentiles* or spiritual seed in their day. But the Lord breaketh each of these ways of administration, and bringeth about his salvation unto each in a way that they are not aware of.

The seed (whether or natural or spiritual) may be dashed and broken, in all the pathes of every administration wherein the spirit of man may be broken, and yet come safe to harbor at last: for the life, which is in the seed or root, in respect of all its shootings up through the natural spirit, and all the motions opperations and several sorts of fruit which it beareth there (whereby it shineth so gloriously in the view of man) may retire or be driven back into the seed or root; yet, remaining there, it is safe in respect of the substance of the promise, though it should lye equally open to the same loss with the spirit of man, in all dispensations which depend upon the motions and exercise of life. That promise which dependeth upon the nature of the thing, cannot be lost where the nature remains: but all those promises which depend upon the qualifications motions or opperations of the thing

thing, muſt needs fail where thoſe qualifications, motions and operations ceaſe. Thus there is none at a greater loſs then the ſeed, for there is none beſides them have that to loſe (None, beſides themſelves, have that true life, that true ſweetneſs and communion with God to loſe which they have) and yet none in their loſs are in ſo great ſafety and at ſo great certainty: for that which they loſe (being ſubſtantial) is not perfectly loſt, but retired, ſhrunk back into its root, where it cannot but ſtrengthen it ſelf, and ſo ſpring up again with advantage.

Now what children are we in underſtanding, all our knowledg being but about a diſpenſation, nay but about the ſhadow of a diſpenſation; and yet how ſhort are we in that, how little of truth do we know there!

III. *Of Radical or Original Knowledg.*

THe *Root*, *Spring*, or *Original* of all things is *perfect unity*, and being perfect unity is alſo *perfect variety*, comprehending all things in it ſelf in intire oneneſs, how vaſtly different or contrary ſoever they appear, when they come forth out of it.

All the varieties and contrarieties in this world, came out of one common maſs: All the differences and diſtinctions of Nature, out of one common nature. He who could look upon them there, how cloſely knit in oneneſs would he find them, notwithſtanding their great diverſities and antipathies here? but if any could look into the root, how much more one ſhould he find them there!

In this root there are too other roots (as I may ſo ſay) two principles, two ſeeds, two fountains of things, perfectly one there (yet even there, being and having that which is the cauſe of all their diſtance and difference elſwhere) and yet perfectly different, nay contrary in their

ſpringing forth, and in their whole courſe from thence. The one is of life, the other of death; the one of good, the other of evil; the one of darkneſs, the other of light; the one of ſweetneſs, the other of bitterneſs; ſo that from one ſpring come thoſe two Fountains, from the one whereof iſſue the freſh cleer ſweet living waters, from the other the putrified muddy bitter dead waters.

The head of the one of theſe is called *God*, in which ſprings up *life*, the *power of life*, the *vertue of Creation, Preſervation, Redemption, Reſtoration, Salvation*, &c. The head of the other is called *Satan*, becauſe of its enmity to this in its nature, productions and operations, it ſtriving to ſwallow up and deſtroy all the light, all the good, all the ſweetneſs, all the happineſs which the other bringeth forth. Now both theſe as they have their riſe, ſo they have their ſtrength from the root, from which if they were not continually fed, they could not continue their vertues, or go through their operations: The power of life failing in the one, and the power of death in the other, they would ſoon grow weak.

Of ſuch ſprouting forth of different and contrary things from one and the ſame root, we ſee emblems every where dayly. How many contrary deſigns and parts do flow from one and the ſame principle of wiſdom in man, which are very evident when he gives them a viſible being and bringing forth in a Comedy or Tragedy.

This name *God*, *Jehovah* which gave being, *Jah* the preſerver of breath, *Adonai* the ſtay or piller of all things, *Zur* the rock, and ſo all the other names of God, are relative, referring to the Creature, or opening ſomewhat of him which refers to the Creature, and is convenient and neceſſary for it, in its preſent ſtation and condition. They are not any of them proper, to the root and ſpring of all things, originally; but only in reference to other things

things (for not that knowledg which is moſt naked and natural, but that which is moſt uſeful to this preſent ſtate is alone diſpenced) yet by this name *GOD*, the Scripture doth not only point at this ſpringing head of Power, but at the root it ſelf.

Now as *God* is a diſtinct root from *Satan*, ſo there is in him *life*, and no *death*; *light*, and no *darkneſs*; *truth*, and no *lye*; *good*, and no *evil*: And ſuch are all his *productions*, *effects* and *operations*, ſuch is all the ſeed which he ſoweth; and all the death and darkneſs which ſprings up in any, is from the contrary power; it is from the enemies ſeed, and of the enemies ſowing. So that take God thus, there is no *darkneſs*, nothing but *light* in him; no *hatred*, nothing but *love* in him, *God is love*. But now underſtand under this word *God* the inmoſt, the utmoſt, the univerſal Root, the root of all roots, natures and principles, not as diſtinct from any thing, but as comprehending every thing; and then it includes death as much as life, darkneſs as much as light, *&c.* and excludes light as much as darkneſs, life as much as death: Indeed there is neither here (but both as much as one;) No light, No darkneſs; No life, no death; No good, no evil; No love, no hatred, but only one thing which cannot be named, which comprehendeth all theſe perfectly, and where they all are in ſuch a way as is ſutable to the root, but not at all as they appear here.

But of what uſe is this knowledg now, or what certainty is there in it as yet? It is of too deep a nature for our preſent conſtitution. We may make our ſelves drunk with it, and thereby unfit for our preſent ſtation, but we cannot ſoberly comprehend and manage it. Such as think to digeſt it, and thereby to advance themſelves above the nature and ſtate, not only of men, but of the higheſt Chriſtians, are they not inſtead thereof thereby humbled, not only beneath Chriſtianity, but beneath man-

hood too? For my part I profeſs I would not (though I fairly might) aſpire beyond my preſent ſtate: That knowledg which I allow in my deſires, is that alone which is proper for me where I am. If I were a *brute* I would not torment and break that my portion of Being in pieces, by aſpiring after the knowledg of a man. Nor as I am, do I deſire to make my ſelf miſerable, by graſping at that which I cannot meaſure. Had I but a ſufficient light and guidance, in the path wherein I am ſet, it would be enough for me at preſent, and I could paſs on very comfortably with it.

Yet let me not injure theſe things, ſince they have been ſo freindly to me, which I would not willingly do, though they had been mine enemies. I perceive they did ſpring up in my ſpirit (with that kind of demonſtration which they brought along with them) as a neceſſary guard in ſome caſes (and ſo they have been of ſome kind of uſe to me, and may to others) more then to ſatisfie any deſire I had after them, or any delight I could take in them.

I ſhall conclude this, thus. This world is a Stage, where ſeveral things come forth, appear, and act their parts. Thus we ſee them. But we ſee not what they were before they were formed for this preſent act on this preſent ſtage, nor what they now are in their principle. Therefore all our knowledg and experience is vanity. Happy is he who can make the beſt of this preſent ſtate of things (ſince there is no poſſibility of proceeding further) without turmoiling himſelf to form it into what it cannot be, or to diſcover that of it which was never intended for, nor can be expoſed to his eye.

IV. *Of the Word, the Spirit and Faith under each Administration, both that of the Law, and that of the Gospel, with an hint at their further tendency.*

1. *Of the Word.*

IN the *Word* there are two things, the *letter* and the *spirit*, (besides a third thing hidden, which is the root and substance of both.) The *letter* is the outward part, the outward description of Truth, the shadow or shell which points out and contains the spirit or kernel. The *spirit* is the inward part, the truth it self, the substance of the shadow, the kernel within the shell.

This appeareth in each Dispensation, both of *Law* and *Gospel*; There was letter and spirit in each: spirit in the Law, letter in the Gospel. The Gospel was couched under the Law, and the Law is hid within the Gospel. So that as from under the Law-dispensation the Gospel breaketh forth and swalloweth up the Law, so under the Gospel-dispensation the Law breaketh out and becometh a vail over the Gospel.

But here now is the difference between Law and Gospel; Though there was letter and spirit in both, yet the letter was chiefly dispenced under the one, and the spirit under the other. The letter was appointed for the litteral people, and the spirit for the spiritual, and so they are managed. The litteral people receive their impression from the letter of the Word, are brought forth by the letter, and fed and maintained by the letter: and the spiritual people receive their impression from the spirit of the Word, are brought forth by the spirit, and fed and maintained by the spirit. So long as the letter of the Word lived in the fleshly people, the fleshly people lived: so long as the spirit of the Word liveth in the spiritual people, the spiritual people live: (for these can live

no more then the former, any longer then they are fed from the root, This dispensation and people may dye as well as the other.) Hence that ministration is called *the ministration of the letter*, this of the *spirit*.

So that mark now, There is *letter* and *spirit*, *life* and *death*, *justification* and *condemnation* in the Word, both in the Copy and in the Original: in Christ which is the Word of God, and in the Scriptures which are the words of Christ: in the heart of Christ, which is Gods Book where he hath writ his Word; and in the heart of man, which is Christs Book where he hath writ his Word. And both these dispensations are equally from God and from Christ from first to last, both in their causes and in their effects.

2. *Of the Spirit.*

The *Spirit* is that *Substance* which comprehends the Word, and is comprehended in the Word. It is the Lord and Servant of *Christ*, who is *the Word of God*. It is that which lives, dwells and reigns both in the flesh and spirit of Christ, and in which they likewise reign. It is the liquor in Christ, which Christ as a Vessel containeth, and also the Vessel which containeth Christ. It is both the root and the fruit: The root from whence Christ groweth, and the fruit which Christ beareth both in his life and death, from whence they both sprang, and wherein they both meet.

The ministration of this is not yet made manifest. It was only pointed at in the ministration of the Gospel, which did shadow out it, as the Law did shadow out that ministration: or if you will, both the Law and the Gospel did shadow this out in different respects and degrees, the one more grosly, the other more refinedly; the one more darkly and remotely, the other more nearly and clearly. The Law stood aloof at a great distance from it, yet spake of it, and referred unto it; the Gospel did as it were

were touch it, ſpeaking the very name and manifeſting the very nature of it: Yet the very miniſtration of the Spirit in that diſpenſation of the Goſpel, if it be well looked into, will appear rather a ſhadow then the thing it ſelf, and every way more like a ſhadow then like the thing it ſelf.

Now who knoweth whether thoſe things, which have been ſo contrary in all diſpenſations hitherto, ſhall not here meet? Life and Death, Heaven and Hell, which every where elſe are at ſuch a diſtance, may here touch one another, and agree very ſweetly together, even ſo fully, that both thoſe names and natures whereby they did appear and were ſo various in all diſpenſations, may here be drowned and vaniſh. Yet it is not by either's real loſs of any thing, whereby and wherein they differed, that they become thus harmoniouſly united, but by both their entering into a more perfect fulneſs. And he to whom this ſeemeth ſo ſtrange, and who is ſo much offended at it, let him fairly anſwer me this following queſtion.

Were not Hell and Heaven at union in their root before they were brought forth? Were they not at reſt and peace in the Power and Nature of God from whence they were produced? Without controverſie, what ever lay there, lay in reſt, and whatſoever is brought back thither, returneth to reſt. Now did the Lord bring forth any thing which he cannot bring back again, and who can ſay he will not? Surely every thing moſt naturally breatheth after that condition of reſt and fulneſs which it can alone enjoy in his boſom. Moſt certain it is, that the vaſt Spirit of the Lord taketh in all things, howſoever it diſpoſe of them. Thence they came, thither they return, there they are, and doubtleſs there they may be found in union and agreement, by him whoſe Spirit is quick and piercing enough.

Happy is he who can read this truth in the Spirit of the Lord,

Lord, but wretchedly miſerable is he who frameth falſe imaginations in his own mind, by the vanity of his own reaſon concerning it.

3. *Of Faith.*

Faith is a ſhadowy or ſubſtantial *life*, flowing from the *Spirit*, through the *Word*, into the *ſeed*, ſeeking after, faſtening upon and reſting in the Spirit. This is Faith.

Firſt I ſay it is *Life*, It is a touch of life, it is a ſpring of life, it is the choyce of life which God bringeth forth, in his own, in his own ſeaſons. We may miſtake in aſcribing names to other things, whoſe nature and principle we know not; but this we are taught by God, who knoweth things very well, to name *Faith*. The life of the Law was *obedience*, a ſpirit of obedience, by this a man was enabled to live in and according to the Law: but this life is *faith*, a ſpirit of faith; He who beleeveth is only able to enter into this life, and to walk in it.

I call it *ſhadowy or ſubſtantial*, becauſe it is either as it is looked upon. Look upon it backward, and it is ſubſtantial; Look upon it forward, and it is but ſhadowy. As the miniſtration of the Goſpel was a miniſtration of the ſpirit of that which was in the Law, ſo the life miniſtred under the Goſpel is a ſubſtantial life in compare with that: But look forward into the ſubſtance of that which is yet behind, and here *faith it ſelf* is but a ſhadow, This life alſo is but a ſhadow. Alas, *the life of Faith* muſt vaniſh! Notwithſtanding all its glory, it muſt dye and lie in its grave like the Law.

Flowing from the Spirit, through the Word, into the ſeed.

The *ſeed* is the veſſel, the only veſſel, which containeth this life. It is not man that this life is ſown in, but the ſeed, and the ſeed is ſown in man. Immortal life, eternal life is wrapped up in immortal ſeed, in eternal ſeed (that is the immediate veſſel,) and this is ſown in the mortal ſpirit of man, which by putting on mortality there, it changeth into

to its own nature. Hence they in whom the ſeed is ſown, and who are changed by it, are called by that name, they are called the ſeed.

This life floweth *from the Spirit* into this ſeed. The Spirit which formeth this ſeed, breatheth into it this breath of life. This ſeed is the ſpirits own veſſel, and this life is his own liquor wherewith he filleth it. The Spirit lyeth in the veſſel, and is continually breathing in it, and that is the life of it.

And it floweth *through the word.* The ſeed is formed by the Word, it is adminſtred by the miniſtry of the Word. The Spirit begeteth by the Word, and the Spirit breatheth life through the Word into that which he hath begotten, even that life which is needfull for it in any diſpenſation into which the Spirit guideth it. Wonderful true, moſt true is that aſſertion, that there is no ſalvation but by the miniſtry of the Word. There is no ſalvation either in the ſhadow or in the ſubſtance any otherwiſe. All the life and ſalvation of God is conveyed to the Word *Chriſt*, and all the ſeveral diſpenſations of life and ſalvation, in their ſeveral circuits, run from Chriſt through and by all the ſeveral miniſtrations of his Word or Words in their ſeveral kinds.

Seeking after, faſtening upon, and reſting in the Spirit.

This is the nature of faith, it breaths in and from, and after the ſpirit. The ſpirit breaths in it, it breaths from the ſpirit, it breaths after the ſpirit and it finds reſt in fetching full ſoops of breath in the ſpirit.

It *ſeeks.* So ſoon as ever it is born it finds it ſelf weak, it finds it ſelf a babe, a child, and it breaths after its father, after union with its father, after the help ſtrength and care of its father, after food and all manner of proviſion which it needs, from its father. There is no life of a more perfect kind, and yet no life more indigent when it is firſt brought forth, or more dependent all

along: and it hath a wonderful ſtrong ſenſe of this, which cauſeth it to breath mightily unto its root for ſap, ſupply and ſuccour.

Nor doth it only ſeek, but ſo faſt as it finds, it *faſtens* upon him. It moſt naturally knoweth him, and where ever it meeteth with him, it clingeth preſently to him. What ever it finds of God it gathers in, where ever it finds God it winds it ſelf into him. This is the whole work of faith, to wind God into it, and to wind it ſelf into God: to receive in the dropings of God, and to melt it ſelf and drop into God.

And ſo far as it finds and faſtens, it hath *reſt*. It is reſtleſs in reſpect of what it hath not found, in reſpect of what it is not yet one with; but ſo far as it is rouled into and hath received in the center, ſo far as it is ſucked into and hath ſucked in the root, it findeth great quiet content and ſatisfaction.

V. *Some few Obſervations touching the Principles of the Ranters.*

AS I have applied my ſelf in general to weigh and underſtand all things relating unto Religion, ſo more particularly the nature, riſe, ſtrain, and courſe of theſe principles; both becauſe they proceeded from perſons formerly of eminent profeſſion, and not barely from them, but from them in a broken eſtate, both which circumſtances may challenge from every ſerious Spirit a more ſelemn conſideration. Now theſe four things I have took notice of in them from the beginning.

1. *Their want of a bottom:* Theſe principles want a foundation of truth in the underſtandings of theſe perſons, inſomuch that though the things themſelves might poſſibly be true, yet they cannot be true as they are apprehended or held forth by them. As for inſtance, Suppoſe

poſe that this be truth, That Light and Darkneſs, Good and Evil, are all one. Now though they in ſpeaking this may utter a ſpeech which may be truth, yet the manner of their ſpeaking and practiſing of it, doth manifeſt that they do not underſtand this truth; but as it is in them, as it is held forth and made uſe of by them, it is a lye.

For if they ſaw the true unity of light and darkneſs in the root, they would alſo ſee its difference: for true unity doth not confound, but comprehend diſtinction; It is not an enemy unto, but the ſpring of all variety and contrariety, from whence they came, and where alone they appear in their ſubſtantial fulneſs. Yea they would not only acknowledg that diſtinction, but they would alſo know and obſerve the diſtinction which wiſdom hath ſet up here between them in his bringing of them forth: If they had the true light in them, they would know that it were proper and good for them in this preſent ſtate, to chuſe the good, and refuſe the evil: That every created eye hath need of ſome created light to ſee by; And while they are in this preſent way of appearance, they would ſuit themſelves unto it. But alas, their practiſe in theſe particulars doth too plainly evidence that they have only got ſome words (ſome notions or apprehenſions) by the end without a true underſtanding of them.

This eye of our reaſon, This eye of our mind can never ſee things of this nature. He who hath another eye, an eye full enough, large enough, and fully opened, he may well venture to view theſe things: but this preſent eye ſhould only be employed about ſuch objects as it is fitted to ſee. Reaſon was appointed to ſee and diſtinguiſh the things of man, or ſuch common things of God as he thinks fit to propoſe to it; but not to peirce into the ſecrets of his Nature and Eſſence: This God hath ſhut up from man, and his eye cannot ſearch it out. Man with

his eye of reason cannot possibly search out what God hath hidden from him, (He that made the eye, cannot he hide from the eye?) it is well if he can receive and make use of what God revealeth to him. *Be wise unto sobriety*, was an injunction layd upon them who had the advantage of a greater light to search into the secrets of God by.

Only one word more concerning this. God hath seperated the light from the darkness, and what God hath parted let no man joyn, indeed no man can. Man may unite them in his fond fancy, but that will vanish, and man will not be able to make it good: but God will be able to make good that foundation of difference, and that difference thereupon which he hath put between them, which is so firm and strong that they cannot meet together, unite together or communicate together within those bounds, *What communion hath light with darkness?*

2. *Their contrariness to the excellency of nature*, either common or renewed. These principles (with the practises which arise from them) are not only contrary to the life and purity of Christ, but also to all that is lovely in the common nature of man: for they do not leave a man fairly open free and unbiassed towards all things, as they seem to import, but they fast bind up all the influences even of common sweetness goodness and righteousness, and also open the floodgates of all manner of unrighteousness, and wickedness. I profess seriously, If I knew this most infallibly, that all things were alike, even in that very sense which is by some apprehended, yet if I found such a nature in me as to be and do according to the tenour hereof, I could not but loath my self and pant after deliverance from such a kind of being.

There are two things excellent in the nature of man in this his present state. The one is, to know that which

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is above him, To acknowledg his Lord and fear him: The other is to walk righteously, lovingly, and sweetly towards his fellow creatures. This was writ in the heart of man naturally, It was writ over again in that dispensation to the *Jews*, and yet again by Christ. We feel we are *men* and not *God*, *flesh* and not *Spirit*, and we are to reverence that which is above us, that which we our selves are not, but live from, and yet further want the supply of: yea although we lose the sense of this, yet that doth not take away that obligation which ariseth not from our sense, but from our nature and state. We also know that we should deal justly, mercifully, sweetly and tenderly with our fellow creatures. Let us say and think what we please, yet we would be dealt so with our selves, and do not esteem the contrary equal with it. Alas how do we delude our selves by cherishing principles in our minds which the very secrets of our hearts, judgments and consciences cannot but disown! And are they so lovely as they are accounted? Can those principles be very good which shut up or banish, not only a new but the old common excellency of Nature, and open and let loose all the filth and abomination of it? Surely man is forward enough of himself to evil and unrighteousness, as also backward enough to that which is good and just, he need not thus egg himself on to the one, and exclude himself from the other, by poysoning his judgment (already too much corrupt) with such corrupting principles.

3. *Their destructiveness to the present state of mankind.* They overthrow the foundation of all sweetness, security or comfortable converse. This necessarily ariseth from the former, for in that they strip a man of all those seeds of ingenuity and civil honesty which are yet left remaining in his nature, or any way repaired by outward art, or any inclination to or power of religion, and introduce in

their ſtead ſeeds of all manner of corruption, they make him fit only for perverſneſs and miſcheif incurable and unavoydable. As for inſtance, He whoſe very principles allow him to, and juſtifie him in lying as well as ſpeaking truth, defrauding as well as dealing uprightly, He that can without any ſcruple rob me of my name, eſtate, wife, &c. beleeving in his very ſoul, and conſcience that he doth therein as well as if he did the contrary, or did forbear ſo to do, which way can I converſe with him, or ſecure my ſelf from him? This world is bad enough as it is, but certainly did but theſe principles overſpread it, it would be far worſe. It would be a very Hell in reſpect of what it now is. It would be ſuch a ſeat of confuſion, oppreſſion, and miſery, as would make them themſelves (from whom theſe principles ſprang, and in whom they do moſt fully raign) perfectly weary of it. (For ſuch miſerable principles are they, that they can only harm them in whom they take place, and others through them, but can in no wiſe ſecure, no not ſo much as them themſelves who proſtitute all their honour and excellency to entertain them.)

This is moſt certain, There is no truth nor righteouſneſs upon the face of this Earth. Man is ſo ſelfiſh, blind and corrupt in his very root (which all the art of common Nature or Religion can neither rectifie nor ſway down) that he cannot be true or juſt either to his neighbor or himſelf. But though there is no truth of righteouſneſs, yet there is a ſhadow of righteouſneſs, whereby the preſent ſtate of things ſubſiſts, from whence that peace, ſweetneſs, ſafety, and enjoyment which man hath, floweth. Now to break down this ſhadow, by the ſubſtance of that truth which man wants, would be excellent ſervice: but to beat it down by a lye, by confuſion, by darkneſs, to thruſt out this ſeeming righteouſneſs by real filthineſs and abomination, this would both bring deſola-

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tion upon the preſent ſeeming happineſs of man, and plunge him into a far deeper miſery then that wherein he yet is. He that will aſcend, let him firſt deſcend; He that will through down righteouſneſs, let him firſt purſue, attain and bring righteouſneſs. He that hath and can at pleaſure fulfil the Law, may challenge ſome liberty in undervaluing it; but it very ill beſeemeth him to make light of it, who is yet in the ſtrength and power of his nature and condition far beneath it.

4. *Their dangerouſneſs in caſe of miſtake.* Man is in a weak ſtate, cometh forth with a weak eye, and hath but a weak ſight and judgment of things. How many ſorts of men do, ſome or other of them every day, diſcover themſelves deceived in their apprehenſions, deceived in their principles, deceived in their practiſes? Thou who art of this judgment, how many doſt thou apprehend deceived? how often haſt thou thy ſelf been deceived before thou arivedſt here? Now ſuppoſe thou alſo ſhouldſt be deceived as well as others, and here again as well as formerly in other things, and that there ſhould at laſt prove both good and evil, Light and Darkneſs, Hell and Heaven, the children of Light, and the children of Darkneſs, &c. what a condition wert thou in? Thou mayſt ſay raſhly, Thou muſt take it as it falls, but art thou ſure that underſtandingly thou canſt be content to do ſo? Alas, the Lord with his engines of miſery will be too hard for thee! Thou alſo wilt be made (with all ſinners) to repent the ſtopping thy ears at the *voyce of Wiſdom*, and harkening to the *enchantments* of thine own feducing ſpirit, which hath led thee *like a fool to the correction of the ſtocks*, for alas thou *kneweſt not that it was for thy life*!

The teſtimonies which Chriſt gave concerning theſe things were not light, nor upon light terms. He dealt fairly and lainly, ſpeaking what he knew, whoſe knowledg was n ither ſmall nor uncertain: and wilt thou undertake

dertake, upon a ſtrong apprehenſion of reaſon, to overthrow that divine light which ſhone in him?

The danger of theſe perſons muſt needs be great: for they do not only practiſe all manner of things which God, Chriſt and Nature condemneth, but they do it as good, and they teach others to do ſo. They call (and that with a loud voice, in the ſight of the Sun) evil good, and good evil, darkneſs light, and light darkneſs, confounding them together and equalizing them both, laughing out of countenance all the wiſdom of God in all his diſpenſations, who hath profeſſedly put a difference between them.

Now if theſe men be in the right, they will have no great advantage, for others will be as ſafe as they: but doubtleſs, if they be in the wrong their danger cannot but be exceeding great.

God hath baffled the reaſon of man in all its undertakings, yea and he delights to make the wiſdom of it appear folly. All the Imaginations of man hitherto have fallen, and can theſe ſtand? My Soul in the inmoſt judgment of it, upon the deepeſt obſervation, ſearch, trial, ſenſe and experience, ſaith; they cannot, but that there muſt needs be a *future eſtate of things wherein all ſhall be ſet to rights, wherein righteouſneſs which hath here been always oppreſſed, ſhall be rewarded, and iniquity which hath as yet flouriſhed ſhall pine in pain and miſery:* as alſo, That *the preſent life and happyneſs of man conſiſts in union, and communion with light, in the ſeveral kinds and degrees of it, proportionable to his eſtate, and in a ſeparation from darkneſs in the ſeveral kinds and degrees of it.*

My advice therefore to all perſons (for their own good and ſafety) is, not to run away with notions and apprehenſions of things, but firſt to meaſure them: And he that is not able to meaſure them, let him not receive them; but let a man only receive what he is able to meaſure.

ſure. What the eye of the ſenſes can truly judg of, they may acknowledg; and thus may the eye of reaſon do alſo: and as for the eye of the ſpirit, though it be cleerer and ſtronger then either of the other, yet it is not ſafe for it to proceed further then ſo: It will be as dangerous for it to receive beyond what it can underſtandingly judge, as it is for the eye either of ſenſe or reaſon. Now tell me, He that in ſenſible things ſhall conclude all one, and not underſtanding himſelf ſhall venture to eat or drink poyſon in ſtead of good, and proper nouriſhment; or He that in things of reaſon ſhall do the like in their kind, what palpable and irrecoverable dangers doth he incur hereby? Nor is the hazard or damage leſs in things of a ſpiritual nature and concernment. Let him therefore that is in this preſent ſtate of weakneſs, in danger of miſcariage in his apprehenſions and motions, and liable to miſery thereby, (I ſay in pity, love, and tenderneſs to him) Let him take heed, and not make his eye uſeleſs by entertaining ſuch a beam as will exclude, or ſuch a mote as will interrupt the truth and cleerneſs of his ſight.

VI. *Of the Various falſe New-births and the true one, which are diſtinguiſhed by their root and nature.*

IOHN 3. 6.

That which is born of the fleſh, is fleſh; and that which is born of the Spirit, is Spirit.

THere are two ways of diſtinguiſhing *the things of God*; The one by the *root* from which they ſpring, The other is by the *nature* which they receive into themſelves from their root. All the Religion of man, all the life that man is capable of, cometh from a fleſhly root: and when it is ſprung in him, it is ſtill but fleſhly in it ſelf or in its own nature. The truth of God, the true nature of God ſpringeth only from the ſpirit of the Lord, and

remaineth ſpirit whereſoever it ſprings, transforming and making that alſo ſpiritual which is truly united to it. More fully thus;

There are two *ſeeds* which ſpring up in this world, The *natural* and the *ſpiritual*, the *earthly* and the *heavenly*, the ſeed of this outward world or nature, which ſeed is *Adam*, the ſeed of another world, of a more inward world or nature, which ſeed is *Chriſt*. Proportionably, there are two *Mothers*, *Wombs*, *or Roots*, in whom theſe ſeeds are begotten, wherein theſe ſeeds are conceived, and from which they ſpring, which are *Hagar* and *Sarah*, the *Jeruſalem below* and the *Jeruſalem above*, *Nature*, and *Grace*, or *the ſpirit of this world*, and *the Spirit which is of God*. In theſe the ſeeds are hid, and out of theſe they ariſe; the one from the one, the other from the other. The fleſhly ſeed comes from the fleſhly mother, out of the fleſhly womb, from the root of fleſh: The ſpiritual ſeed cometh from the womb, and out of the root of the ſpirit. Nor do they only proceed from the root, but they alſo partake of the nature of the root, each do of that root from which they ſpring: ſo that that which ſprings from the Earth, from the fleſh, from the root of this common nature, is of the Earth, is of the fleſh, is of this common nature; and that which ſprings from the root of the Spirit of God, is ſpirit with that ſpirit. Yet more largely;

Every thing is and acts according to its root. The whole nature, courſe and end of every thing is anſwerable to the nature of its root. According as the root is from which the ſeed of the tree ſprings (for the tree grows up from a ſeed, and that ſeed comes from a root) ſuch is the nature of the tree, ſuch is the eſtate and condition of the tree, ſuch is the fruit of the tree, and ſuch will be the end of the tree. This is a general truth, but particularly in this place applied to Religion, *All things in Religion are according to the root from which they ſpring*, All things

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in Religion may grow upon any tree (whether natural, artificial or ſpiritual) but that which diſtinguiſheth them in their root. Now there are two great roots (as there are two great conditions, two great courſes, two kinds of fruit, and two great ends of things, ſo there are two great Originals of things,) Nature and Grace, Fleſh and Spirit, God and Man: There is the earthly and the heavenly root, the ſinful and the holy root, the humane and the divine root. Theſe roots as they are in us have each of them their own riſe, their own nature, their own properties, their own fruit, their own courſe, their own end. The fleſhly root in us hath a fleſhly riſe, a fleſhly nature, fleſhly properties, is in a fleſhly eſtate and condition, runs a fleſhly courſe, brings forth fleſhly fruit, and tends to a fleſhly end, *viz.* to corruption: The ſpiritual root in us hath a ſpiritual riſe, a ſpiritual nature, ſpiritual properties, is in a ſpiritual eſtate and condition, brings forth ſpiritual fruit, and tends to a ſpiritual end; *He that ſoweth to the fleſh, ſhall of the fleſh reap corruption; but he that ſoweth to the ſpirit, ſhall of the ſpirit reap life everlaſting.* This is that which putteth the great difference between things, making the one happy in their miſery, and the other miſerable in their happineſs, namely the difference of their roots: The high, the flouriſhing eſtate of ſome, in all manner of knowledg, in all manner of enjoyments comes to nothing; the low, barren, deſolate eſtate of others is very precious, becauſe of their different roots: *Babel* is unlovely in her greateſt luſtre and glory, even when ſhe is built very high, and adorned with the greateſt ſpiritual riches, magnificence and beauty; but *Sion* is lovely in her greateſt ruines & deſolations, even in her very duſt, and all upon this ground, becauſe of their ſeveral natures which they have from and which are fed by their ſeveral roots in all their changes: It is the root of the fleſh from which *Babel* ſprings, and by which ſhe is exalt-

ed and adorned in her greateſt ſeemingly ſpiritual glory; it is the root of the ſpirit which begets, brings forth, and feeds *Sion* even in her loweſt ebb and diminution. So that mark now, you ſhall finde the ſame things in both: All that you can finde in *Sion* you may finde in *Babylon*; there is not any *knowledg*, there is not any *practiſe* which the ſpirit of man cannot take up, nay and perhaps go through with better then the ſeed; but yet there is a vaſt difference, they are ſtill of a different nature, which difference floweth from the difference of the *root*. Therefore if a man will indeed know his eſtate and condition, it is not to be done ſo much by conſidering of any thing that is in him, or of any thing that floweth from him barely in it ſelf, as to ſearch out thereby and therein the root from which it proceedeth. Not ſo much to conclude, I am ſafe becauſe I repent or beleeve, but to find out the true root from whence theſe flow, & to ſeek for the true nature in the things themſelvs.

To make this to be more manifeſt, I ſhall inſtance in ſome things of the greateſt conſequence, and ſhew that the diſtinction among them doth ariſe from the nature of their root, as particularly in theſe, 1. In *Regeneration*, 2. In *Knowledg*, 3. In *Repentance*, 4. In *Faith*, 5. In *Love*, 6. In *Experience*, 7. In *Liberty*. All which may grow from each, from the root of mans nature dreſſed and purified, and ſo be fleſhly, or from a new nature from the new creation of God in Chriſt, and ſo be ſpiritual.

1. For *Regeneration*. You will ſay, for a man to be born again, this is the greateſt evidence of life that can be: yea but Regeneration it ſelf is according to the nature of the root. Mans ſpirit may enter into the womb of fleſh, and there be born again, ſo ſaith Chriſt here (ſpeaking of regeneration, ſpeaking of the ſecond birth) *that which is born of the fleſh is fleſh*. A man may be new born in Religion by the fleſh, that is, by the uſe of his own wiſdom and reaſon, of ſerving and conſidering the things that are diſcovered by God

God in his dispensations, especially if they be held out very cleerly and miraculously as the case was here: Any man who had been ingenious might have acknowledged what *Nicodemus* did here, That *Christ* was *a teacher come from God*, and so consequently that there was just ground to receive his doctrine and beleeve in him. Now that regeneration which ariseth hence, which is from flesh, which is from the use of any wisdom, reason, understanding or power in man, it is according to this root, it is a change of flesh from flesh into flesh, it is all along but a fleshly change, it is not the change of a mans spirit into a new nature, but only a change of the shape and form of it: The man indeed seems mightily changed unto himself, new-born, new-made, he is not what he was, but a new thing, hath new thoughts of God, new desires towards God, new hopes, a new life and conversation, and so it is with him in a kind, in a sence he is not what he was, he is new; but all this newness is but the newness of the flesh, it is but the putting on a new garment, a new dress on the old man, on the old wisdom, reason, understanding, ingenuity and integrity, which belongs to the nature of *Adam*, and may easily be found in that nature, where it is any thing awakened and polished.

But now that *regeneration* which is from God, that man who is brought forth again in the *womb of his spirit*, that man who hath a new root from the seed of his life, this change is truly *spiritual*, this man is truly *spirit*: cast this man into what shape and form you will, he is still spirit. The other mans *Religion* consists in his form, (which the sweetness and ingenuity of his *earthly principle* feeds it self in, and exerciseth it selfe about) so that take away his form and you take away his Religion; but this mans *Religion* consists in the nature of his spirit, in the nature of that root from which his spirit came, and which it is one with.

2. As touching *Knowledg*. Knowledg is the next thing

to the new birth: when a man is new born in any kinde, he is ſtill brought forth into a new light; in which he is to live, according to which he is to move and act, and by which he is to be perfected. Now the ſpirit of man may be brought forth in any kind of knowledg; light of every ſort is ſuitable to his ſpirit; and according to the breaking of it forth, ſtill he can take it in. Indeed what can more fully diſtinguiſh the Children of light, then light, and yet what light cannot the ſpirit of man, the Child of darkneſs transform himſelf into? what truth, what myſtery can be revealed, which the ſpirit of man cannot ſuck in? *Though I had the gift of prophecy*, ſaith the Apoſtle, *and underſtood all myſteries, and all knowledg*, &c. *and wanted love*, implying the poſſibility of ſuch a thing. There is a rationality in all the things of God, which the reaſon of man may reach, eſpecially if it be aſſiſted by God, and yet that man not have a divine root in himſelf, for want of which his knowledg cannot be call'd truly divine, though it be from above. The things themſelves may be from above, the diſcovery of them to him may be from above, yea he may receive divine help in the receiving of them, and yet that in him which receiveth them may be but fleſh, and may receive but the fleſh of them. Man receiveth but the rationality, but the outward nature, but the external knowledg of the things of God, not the inward ſubſtance. So that all his knowledg in heavenly things, wherwith he abounds, is but fleſhly; it is not true knowledg, it is not the knowledg of the truth, it is not true light, it is not the light of the Lord, it is not the light of a ſpirit lighted from the Spirit of the Lord; but a light of man, or if you will, a fleſhly light of God, at which man hath lighted his fleſhly ſpirit. All the light which mans ſpirit is capable of in the things of God, doth not argue life, doth not argue truth to accompany it, becauſe it may be borne of the fleſh, and ſo be fleſhly; nay indeed is, and cannot but

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be ſo: All his knowledg of *God*, of *Chriſt*, of *Sin*, *Death*, *Hell*, of *life*, *ſalvation* and *happineſs*, and *the way* to each, &c. be it never ſo cleere and never ſo full in the heart, yet it is all but fleſhly, becauſe it is in a fleſhly ſpirit, proceeding from a fleſhly root, and can give forth it ſelf, but according to its own nature, and can be received in, but according to the capacity of that which receiveth it. As man who receiveth theſe things into himſelf, ſprings from a root of fleſh and is fleſh, ſo that which he receiveth of the things of God, is but fleſhly: He himſelf under all his ſpiritual changes (as he accounteth them) and with all his ſpiritual notions, is but *fleſh*.

But now he which is *ſpirit*, all the knowledg which he hath is *ſpiritual*; the leaſt degree of his light is ſpiritual: He *that is born of the ſpirit* is brought forth into the *true light*, into the light of the ſpirit, where he ſeeth and diſcerneth the things of God in their own true nature. He knoweth *the true God*, and his *very Son Jeſus Chriſt*, He knoweth *the true Death*, *the true Life*, *the true Reſurrection and Glory of the Son*, yea he learneth and knoweth, in his own order and place, all the truths of God, not as they are held forth by each man, but as they are in *Jeſus*. Let knowledg come never ſo fleſhlily clothed to him, he thruſts off all that is fleſh of it, and receives in nothing but ſpirit: whereas the other, let knowledg come never ſo ſpiritually to him, receiveth in and can receive in only the fleſh of it.

3. For *Repentance*, which is a *dying unto ſin*, which is natural unto him that is new-born and brought into the light. This the ſpirit of man can do too, and cannot but do; Every change in him from every kind and degree of corruption (whereof there is dayly occaſion miniſtered unto him) cauſeth repentance. Mans natural ſpirit, opened to ſee it ſelf, cannot but repent, it cannot but make him loath himſelf, his own nature, his own ſtate,

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his own course, his own end. What man, had he the view of himself, of his spirit, could forbeare abhorring the nature and state of it? There is that in the nature of man which cannot but turne from that corruption which he hath contracted, with all the concomitants and effects of it: so that were but the nature of man awakened, though there were neither Heaven to reward nor Hell to punish, he could not but loath sin, though this is also true, that now by the power of his corruption it is become a new nature to him, and so he loveth it, and would not be rid of it: yet there is the relique of somewhat at the bottom of it, which is his first and truest nature, which hath a contrariety in it hereunto, and which upon occasion of being stirred at any time, discovereth that contrariety. But for all that, the spirit of man doth only repent fleshlily, I say this *Repentance* let it arise never so high, and be heightened by never so many fresh discoveries of God and spiritual considerations, yet still it is but fleshly: for that which the light of God discovers and stirs in the nature of man, is but of the nature of man.

But now, That Repentance which ariseth from a true root, from a renewed spirit, from a spirit changed into the nature of the seed which is sown in it, this repentance be it never so low, let it be never so thickly, deeply and darkly covered with a seeming approbation and justification of sin, yet the thing it selfe, the repentance it self is spiritual. It coming from a spiritual root must needs be spiritual, notwithstanding its contrary black appearance, as the other notwithstanding all its light, brightness and glory, is but carnal.

4. For *Faith*, which *is the new life*. Mans spirit doth naturally beleeve (though his Faith is but occasionlly drawn forth) Seeing his danger, his misery, he cannot but lean upon that which is held out to him as his proper rescue, releif and support. Let God in Christ be discovered

covered to be the only fortreſs, man cannot but run thither. And yet his Faith and all his motions in this kind having but fleſh, having but ſelf, having but his own nature (viz. the nature of the firſt Adam) for their root, what can they be but fleſhly, but of his own nature, but of the nature of the firſt *Adam? Nicodemus* here could not but run to Chriſt, acknowledg Chriſt, beleeve on Chriſt, but what ſaith Chriſt to him? Ah poor *Nicodemus, that which is born of the fleſh is fleſh.*

To open this a little further, becauſe it is the main thing whereupon all dependeth, If either the nature or object of faith be miſtaken, the miſcarriage is moſt certain, therefore there is need of great warineſs here; Now to make this truth aſſerted here, appear the more evident, I ſhall add this conſideration following.

The nature of man came from the nature of God, (If you ſhould ſtumble at this expreſſion, and ſay it came from his Will, yet ſure you will not deny his will to be his nature:) And as there was at firſt, ſo there is ſtill a naturalneſs between God and man, though not ſo open and manifeſt. God doth naturally take care of man, and man doth naturally depend upon his God. Were the heart of God but opened, we ſhould ſee there that from which the nature of man did flow, and his love unto man and care of him even in his broken eſtate; and were the heart of man but opened, we ſhould read there dependance and confidence upon his God. It is his very nature, though at preſent he be exceedingly turned out of it by an heap of corruption; but let the light and diſcoveries of God break in upon him, they ſtir up this again in him preſently: only indeed his corruption is ſo ſtrong that he cannot come off cleverly in any motion of this kind, but his heart and nature ſtands towards it. Now is not this evident, That whatever is in the nature of man, may be drawn forth, and that what is thus drawn forth from the Nature of

man, is but natural or fleshly? It is natural to man to look out for help, and as natural to him to trust that which is discovered to him as proper and willing to help him: And this faith, though it be awakened, and stirred, nay as it were begotten in him by divine means, yet that doth not argue it to be divine. That which the spirit of the Lord by his warmth and quickening vertue awakeneth in and draweth out of the fleshly root (notwithstanding his divine breathings and influences upon it) doth not thereupon become Divine; though it is easie for weak man, who is not acquainted with such kind of things, without much questioning to account it so.

But now, That *faith* which proceeds from a *new nature*, from *a new birth from God*, John 1.12. 13. from a *spiritual root*, that must needs be spiritual. I shall not need to insist upon the rest, I shall therefore only mention them.

5. For *Love*. There is a love in the nature of man, which doth naturally flow forth towards that which is lovely to the eye of his nature: Now God and his Christ, having all the excellency in them that is taking to the eye and heart of man, and much more, upon the discovery of this unto man, how can man chuse but love them! yet this arising frō the nature of man, upon such a discovery as his nature is capable of admitting, is but according to the root, it is but natural, it is but fleshly. But that love which proceedeth from a new life, that love is of a new nature, even of the nature of that spirit out of which it shoots.

6. For *Experience*. Man may have many experiences in a natural way of religion and devotion, or in any dispensation wherein he is placed; Experiences of God, experiences of his own heart, experiences of the nature of things, (the people of the Jews had many experiences of Gods owning them, and care of them, *&c.*) And yet these also are according to the root. Those experiences which

which the ſpirit of man, the nature of man, the underſtanding of man gathereth and comprehendeth, they are but experiences of man, they are but experiences in and according to the light and nature of man: Thoſe experiences alone which are gathered by the nature and obſervation of the new life, they only teſtifie the truth of, and they alone are uſefull to that life.

7. And laſtly, For *Liberty*. True liberty is a very ſweet effect of the light of the Goſpel. The ſpirit of man in this preſent ſtate of nature, is commonly bound up in darkneſs (every mans darkneſs is his priſon) whom light doth ſet free. Now as mans ſpirit may receive the light of the Goſpel (after a maner the ſpirit of man may receive that light which is held forth in the diſpenſation of the Goſpel) ſo mans ſpirit may come forth into liberty, into great liberty, he may feel himſelf free from all his bonds, yea this freedom may be ſo large and clear to him that he may be able to ſay in his heart, *all things are lawful for me*: and yet all this may be but the liberty of mans ſpirit, and another that ſeems to be in all maner of bonds, may have the true freedom, for the one is true, though but in its birth or ſeed, and the other is not true, though in its greateſt growth and flouriſhing.

The ſubſtance of all that truth is in God, whereof in man there is but the weak dark ſhadow: He therefore that is begotten by God (he that flowes from the generative vertue of his divine nature) is begotten in that ſubſtance; but he which is begoten by man (or that which is begotten in man by the pureſt and exacteſt ſtrain of the human ſpirit, either his own or any others, though with the greateſt furtherances and aſſiſtances even from above) is begotten but in ſome part or other of the ſhadow, which when the ſubſtance appears, cannot but vaniſh, paſs away, and prove a lye ſo far as it was taken for the truth; for the pureſt extract that can be raiſed, even by God himſelf, out

of the ſpirit of man, is not the thing, but the ſhadow of it. But now there is the truth in the ſeed in weakneſs, as well as the truth in growth. The greateſt perfection of the ſpirit of man is but a lye, ſo far as it takes upon it to be the truth; for it is but a fleſhly image of truth, it is not truth it ſelf: All the *Repentance, Faith, Love*, &c. which the ſpirit of man can poſſibly be raiſed unto by any thing that can work upon his ſpirit, is but a ſhadow of that Repentance, faith, love *&c.* which is in the nature of God and floweth from the nature of God (for there is in God a turning from that which he calleth to our ſpirits to turn from which is Repentance, and adherence to and confidence in that which he calleth to us to caſt our ſelves upon, which is faith) but is not the thing it ſelf. But now the ſeed, and that which is in it and cometh from it, even in its greateſt weakneſs, is truth: That *Repentance*, that *Faith*, that *Love*, *&c.* that floweth from this nature, from this life, is of this nature, is of this life. The meaneſt the loweſt thing that is *born of the ſpirit is ſpirit*, even in its loweſt ſtate, in its loweſt kind and degree of motions; and the greateſt the higheſt thing *that is born of the fleſh*, even in its greateſt height, in the utmoſt degree of all its ſpiritual exaltation, exerciſe and motion, *is* but *fleſh*. One man may run with much quickneſs and cleerneſs through all diſpenſations, and be wonderfully raiſed, and yet remain but fleſh before, in, and after all; Another may be in the loweſt form of the loweſt diſpenſation, and yet be ſpirit there.

It is true theſe things forementioned are all of them effects (or at leaſt concomitants) of the Goſpel. Man, dark man, hears no news of a new birth, of the knowledg of God, of Repentance, Faith, *&c.* But yet where the Goſpel cometh, theſe things ſo far as they are in the nature of man, are awakened and heightened, *Partly by Satan* thereby to keep out the truth (for hereby he cozeneth and deceiveth men, making them beleeve they are new

new men, whereas they are new only in respect of what they outwardly were, *viz.* in respect of the form or shape wherein their spirit was, but not in respect of their inward nature) and *partly by God*, to make a proof or trial of the spirit of man throughout: At first God tried him in his whole or sound, and now he trieth him in his broken estate, in all the several changes he can undergo there: Therefore doth the Lord not only draw forth what is in him, but also add thereunto by gifts and assistances from above, that at length he may give forth a compleat experiment of man, what he is or what he can come to. And although these experiments be not of use to the nature and eye of the Lord, to further his sight or knowledg; yet there is a nature and eye to which they are very useful, yea necessary, to which nature and eye the Lord is engaged by his nature, to make them manifest in such a way, manner, season and proportion as his nature and theirs require.

For the better illustration yet a little further, both of this truth in general and of these particular instances, Take notice of this threefold distinction of the spirit of man, or carefully observe, and distinguish the spirit of man in this threefold estate or condition. First, in his *natural growth*. Secondly, in his *Transplantation*. Thirdly, in his *spiritual Renovation*.

1. There is *the spirit of man in its natural way of growth*. The spirit of man naturally inclineth towards excellency: There is indeed a bulk of corruption which hangeth about him and turneth him aside, but his own spirit disrelisheth it, and he wisheth he were freed from it, and made to be in himself that which is naturally excellent. This is the heart of every man by nature: He would serve God, he would enjoy God, he would be just and righteous to men; It is the corruption which hangeth about his nature, and is grown so strong and prevalent that it is now

become his nature, which maketh him otherwiſe, but in his root, in his principle, he is not ſo: and he thirſterh to be delivered from this bondage of corruption which thus turneth him aſide from himſelf. (The natural ſpirit of man, which is the principle part of the Creation, cannot be excluded from groaning with the reſt of the Creation under that load and burthen of vanity and corruption which lyeth chiefly upon it: in it ſelf therefore it is no friend thereunto, but unto that which is ſutable to its own nature.)

So that now whatſoever carrieth a ſtamp of excellency upon it (as all the ways of righteouſneſs towards man, and all the ways and Inſtitutions of God concerning his Worſhip do) man cannot but aſpire after and endeavor to conform himſelf unto: For though man cannot ſee the particular Wiſdom of God in his diſpenſations and inſtitutions, yet withall he cannot but ſee that he wanteth his light and guidance, and that it is proper for him to obſerve and obey his pleaſure and commands, without his particular underſtanding the reaſon of them.

Hence it cometh to paſs that man ſpringeth up, and flouriſheth in any way of Religion wherein he is ſet. It is ſo natural to him to love God, to truſt God, to ſeek after and follow his directions, and man is ſo ſenſible of the reality of his ſpirit herein, that there is no beating him out of his apprehenſions concerning the relation between God and him, or concerning the truths of thoſe ways wherein he worſhips and ſerves him. He findeth that he doth naturally incline to God, and deſire the knowledg of his ways, and he cannot but beleeve that God doth as naturally incline to him and guide him in his ways. (It is true, There is that in the preſent nature of man which hateth God; but this is alſo as true, There is that in the nature of man which loveth that root of excellency in God from which it came at firſt, and which is ſtill its life,

hope,

hope, desire, and perfection.)

And though man naturally fall into that way and form of Religion in which he is educated, yet so far as any thing can be held out to his understanding and reason, either further in, or different from, what he hath received, he cannot but endeavor ingeniously to weigh it, and be ready to give up himself to be changed by it, so far as it approveth it self weighty. So far as any one falls short of this, he falleth short of being a man, and his own spirit will justly condemn him therein.

Now how many changes by this means may man be brought into in Religion! His eye and understanding is so shallow, that ever and anon different discoveries may be made unto him both concerning outward worship, yea and also concerning the spiritual nature, exercises and practises of Religion. His old way, his old apprehensions may be made appear to him to have been but vanity, and somewhat more new and more seemingly substantial may be represented to him. Poor weak-spirited man is fit only to be baffled and made a fool of: Fain he would betake himself somewhere and fix, and so he may for a time, but afore he is aware somewhat stronger will shake it, somewhat cleerer will dispose it; which if he doth but open the eye of his nature and reason, he cannot but let in; and if he do not, he is but a brute and not a man, and maintains his own standing brutishly, not rationally; which though it may occasion some brutish ease to him at present, yet will prove his loss at the upshot. But that man who is truly a man, being industrious to search out the mind and will of the Lord, and quick to take in that light and these discoveries which in various kinds and degrees of rays are darted forth, cannot chuse but undergo many changes, both according to the diversity of these discoveries and according to the difference of his own capacity, both which dayly alter.

Man

Man is ſtill growing and his light in every kind continually changed, how then can he himſelf eſcape changes! And that man which is truly ingenious (giving every thing ſcope in his ſpirit according to the nature and vertue of it, ſearching into the Scriptures, praying for the help of God; and embracing every beam of light ſo far as he can find it to be ſo) how high may he grow in Religion, and yet the root of mans nature, may feed him in all theſe deſires and in all theſe endeavors! We miſtake when we think mans nature inclineth him only to corruption; No, there is a root in him that inclineth him to Reaſon, to Righteouſneſs, &c. which did he give ſcope to, the Lord would bleſs in its way (though this were no ſtep or degree towards the new life:) The image of God in man is broken, but not annihilated. There is ſtill a true repreſentation of God in him, though in much darkneſs and confuſion: The image of God may ſtill be found in man though under an huge heap of rubbiſh: and if God at any time ſtir this, it cannot but appear more, and act towards God and after righteouſneſs and excellency; yea if the Lord dung and water it much it will ſhoot forth very far, and grow very large and high in knowledg, faith and obedience due to God either under the Law, or under the Goſpel.

2. There is *the ſpirit of man tranſplanted* by vertue of a diſpenſation from God. There is not only the ſpirit of man growing, as well as he can, on his old broken ſtock from his old decayed root: but there is alſo the ſpirit of man taken out of the old ſtock and grafted into *a new Olive-tree*, by the power and vertue of a diſpenſation, in ſo much as he loſeth the ſcent of his old corruption, and taſteth of the ſweetneſs and fatneſs of this new root. Yea he hath by this means a new Spirit, a new Life, a new Power; This or that particular diſpenſation of God ſeizing

ſeizing upon him, by the vertue which it hath in it and carrieth with it, maketh him new in the world, yea and new in himſelf: ſo that by the influence of that diſpenſation, yea and according to the outward meaſure of it, he may be a new Tree and bring forth new fruit unto God. We have two great inſtances of this, the one in that national people of the *Jews*, the other in the converted *Gentiles*.

The *Jews*, they were tranſplanted from among the reſt of the *Nations* into *Chriſt* who was their *Olive-tree*, (*Rom.* 11. 17. 24.) out of which they grew: They had a *Life* within, and a *light* without beyond the reſt of the world: They had *the mind of God, the guidance of God, the protection of God, the inſtructions of God*, &c. and ſo they might well go further in the knowledg and praſtiſe of Religion then other Nations could.

After them the *Gentiles*, ſome of the Gentiles, ſome of all Nations among the Gentiles were tranſplanted in their ſtead, yea and were put more within the root, receiving a ſtronger influence from it then the *Jews* did: They had a further degree of *light, life, power, &c.* held forth and adminiſtred to them, whereby they might proceed much further then ever the Jewes could. Their ſtate, kind and degree of growth in Religion, was very great, above the Jewes, which did ariſe from the advantage of their diſpenſation.

1. They had thereby *a deeper diſcovery of light* then the Jews: they had a deeper, more inward and ſpiritual opening of the things of God in them and upon them, then ever was diſpenced to the Jews: Thoſe things which were dark and myſterious in thoſe diſcoveries of God to the Jewes, were manifeſt and plain in the light held out to them.

2. They had *a ſtronger life*. As that which God held forth to them was ſpirit, ſo that which God brought forth in them was ſpirit (for ſo it was in compare with

that which was held forth to the Jewes, and that which in was brought forth in the Jews.) They had a life them (in and by vertue of that their diſpenſation) fit to receive that ſtrength of life which God held out to them. All the life of the Jews was but death, to that life which the Gentiles had by the Goſpel.

3. They had *a more abundant power.* There was a power which did overſhadow and accompany that outward people of the Jewes, The outward power of the Lord (as I may ſo ſay) did great outward things for them: But now, There was an inward power of life diſpenced to the Gentiles, ſo that they found the very power of the life of the Lord dwelling in them, and the Spirit of the Lord (the very power of the ſpirit of the Lord) dwelling in that life. Nothing was too hard for that power to do, which hovered about the Jews; Nothing was too hard for that power to do which dwelt in the beleeving Gentiles, but a beleeving diſciple might be able to do all things through Chriſt feeding his ſpirit with life within, in the diſpenſation of the Goſpel.

4. They had *a greater union with Chriſt, and a greater preſence of Chriſt among them.* Chriſt was more in them, Chriſt was more with them; They were more in Chriſt, they were more with Chriſt then the Jews were. It was the ſame root into which both were received by its opening to each, but the diſpenſation or manner of receit was far different. It was the outward part which opened to receive the Jewes, It was the outward part into which they were received: It was the inward part which opened to receive the Gentiles, It was the inward part into which the Gentiles were received. Though this alſo be true, that the Beleevers among the Jews were received into the inner part, and thoſe which beleeved not among the Gentiles were received but into the outward part.

The Jews had *a kind of of union* with Chriſt, a *preſence* of Chriſt, *a participation* of Chriſt, as is evident by the

Ark

Ark among them, and by the *Manna* and *Rock* in the wilderneſs which accompanied them, which Manna was Chriſt, and which Rock was Chriſt, (*They did eat of that ſpiritual meat, and drink of that ſpiritual drink,* 1 Cor. 10. 3. 4.) They had alſo *a light, a life and power* in the Law leading them to Chriſt, All their *ſacrifices and ceremonies* taught them Chriſt, and therein any that were any way skilfull could not chuſe but read the *Meſsiah*. But now in the Goſpel there is a cleerer manifeſtation, a fuller union, a richer life, a more mighty power, a more inward and divine light, a light of the Spirit of the Lord, and a preſence of the Spirit in that light.

Yet this alſo may be ſown and grow up in the ſpirit of man, where having not depth enough of earth for it to ſink into and be nouriſhed, it muſt needs wither and dye. The light of God ſown in the Jews cannot live there, for alas it is but the ſpirit of man there in which it is ſown, and that cannot feed the mighty life and ſpirit of the Lord; It naturally receiveth in but what is ſutable to it ſelf, and if any thing more be forced as it were upon it, ſo that it cannot but admit it, yet upon advantage of the diſappearing of that power or of the increaſe of its own ſtrength, it ſoon thruſts it out again: And the light of God ſown in the Gentiles cannot live then neither, for that is but the ſpirit of man alſo; And though the ſpirit of man be raiſed a little higher by an higher light & communication of God in Chriſt, and thereby become much more changed (even into a ſpiritually glorious eſtate and condition) yet remaining ſtill himſelf at bottom, he will ſpue up all again at laſt and return unto himſelf. This new people of God, the Gentiles, do as naturally ſlide back from their life, from their God, from their Chriſt, as ever the Jews did, ſo that this can be the ſtanding people no more then the other. It requireth great coſt to bring either of theſe peoples to any thing, but with much eaſe at any time, they either of them ſlide back from that which they were

woond up unto, by the mighty power and preſence of the Spirit of the Lord.

So that mark now, This converted Gentile, This tranſplanted Gentile muſt needs fall from the truth. He is not entered deep enough into the root, nor hath not depth enough in him to receive the root, ſo that this preſent ſtation of his in the root with the preſent union and communion between them by vertue of the preſent diſpenſation (by which he is as it were woond up out of himſelf and his own nature into this) muſt needs vaniſh in time. The ground which is not prepared by the ſpirit and nature of the Lord (and ſo made good in it ſelf) cannot alwaies retain and give nouriſhment to the ſeed of God, but muſt one time or other caſt it up again: The perſon who is thus enlightened, enlivened, how far ſoever in this way he be aſsiſted and owned, though he *taſte of the heavenly gift, and of the powers of the world to come, and be made partaker of the Holy Ghoſt, &c.* yet for all that cannot but fall away. That which is *Adam* at bottom, will return to his own principle in the concluſion, how far ſoever he be exalted beyond it at preſent, by vertue of the moſt lively diſpenſation whatſoever.

3. There is *the ſpirit of man renewed* in God through Chriſt, the ſpirit of man new made in his own nature by the nature of another root, the ſpirit of man new begotten, new born of *water and the ſpirit*, the ſpirit of man truly converted and changed into the *nature, vertue, life and power* of the *Kingdom* by the *ſeed* and *leaven* of the Kingdom: and this ſpirit which is thus born of God, is ſo united to the Lord as to become one with him, not in this or that outward reſpect, but in his own inmoſt life and nature. This alone is *the truth*: This is the *true birth*, The union of this ſpirit is the *true union*, when the ſpirit of a man is ſo united to the Lord as to become one with him in his own nature; not in the life or power of a preſent diſpenſation (which to day is and to morrow vaniſheth) but

in

in the true nature of his own ſpirit and life (which abideth for ever.) Now whatſoever flowes, whatſoever grows up from this ſpirit, is truth: All the *repentance, faith, love, &c.* which iſſue hence are true, of the true kind, having the true ſtamp and image of Chriſt upon them. Here you may find *the true death of Chriſt* and *the true life of Chriſt, the true underſtanding of Chriſt, the true faith of Chriſt, &c.* whereas that which is ſo only in a diſpenſation, whether of *Law* or *Goſpel*, though it may be ſo in its kind and may ſerve the preſent turn, yet it is not the abiding truth.

Mans nature, mans life, mans power (even that which *Adam* had from God and which is the image of God) is but fleſhly. His inclination and natural ability to beleeve, to love, to obey, it is but fleſhly. The firſt man is of the earth earthly, take him with all his qualifications and endowments: That light and knowledg of God which he had, with his capacity of receiving in more, was but earthly: *Adam*, whom God daſhed in peeces, was but the *earthen veſſel of the Potter.* Yea in every diſpenſation ſince, all that is of man there, is fleſh: All that is ſtirred up in man is fleſh: That power of beleeving, of loving and obeying which was raked up in the ruines of mans nature, being at any time again rouzed, refreſhed and aſſiſted by any light or power from God, in the midſt of all its lively motions and operations, is ſtill but fleſh.

But yet there is *ſpirit* as well as *fleſh*, and there is *a ſpirituall birth* as well as *a fleſhly birth*, and that which is begotten and born of the ſpirit is ſpirit, as well as that which is born of the fleſh is fleſh. God doth not only try the ſpirit of man in his ſeveral diſpenſations, but he doth alſo here and there ſprinkle the ſeed of his one ſpirit: He doth beget and bring forth *Iſaac*, *the ſeed of promiſe, his own ſon*, under the Law, under the Goſpel, as well as *Iſhmael*. Now it is the ſpirit which begets *Iſaac*, which ſoweth the ſeed of God in the *womb of Sarah*: and that which is begotten

and born of the ſpirit is *Iſaac*, that which ſprings up from his own ſowing out of the womb of his own ſpirit, is his own ſeed. *That which is born of the fleſh, is fleſh: and that which is born of the ſpirit, is ſpirit.*

Therefore Sirs *look to your root.* What I have ſaid unto you hitherto, I ſay unto you ſtill, *Look to your Foundations*, If your root be fleſh, all your glory muſt down: All your ſpiritual apprehenſions and hopes will vaniſh and leave you in the ſuds, if they be but fleſhly in their root: If your Foundation be in the ſand, the higher your building in Religion is, the greater will the fall thereof be. That which is exalted neereſt to Heaven in its preſent growth and luſtre, if it prove not right, ſhall be thrown down to Hell with the greateſt indignation, and ſink into the ſharpeſt wrath and miſery there. The eaſieſt part of Hell is uneaſie enough, but the darkeſt chambers of it are reſerved for the deepeſt *Hypocrites*, which they without all controverſie are, who hold forth the higheſt reſemblance of the *life*, *liberty* and *purity* of the Spirit of the Lord, and yet have not the true nature of it in them, but in whom all this ſprings from a fleſhly Foundation.

VII. *Of the true Nature and Vertue of the Kingdom of GOD.*

1 Cor. 4. 20.

For the Kingdom of God is not in word, but in power.

THere have always been great diſputes, about the *nature* and *truth* of *Religion*, between the Diſciples thereof, and the Pretenders to it. Every one will have their apprehenſions, their light, their way, their practiſe to be the truth. Yea many times that which is indeed truth runs low, and that which is but vanity, ſwells and makes a great ſhew, appearing as very high, pure aud ſpiritual.

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That which is empty makes a great ſound, drawing the multitudes after it; and that which is ſubſtantial is caſt aſide, as being in no wiſe likely to be that life and ſubſtance, which all pretend to ſeek after.

This Diſpute is very hot now upon the face of the Earth. What ſort of Religious perſons do not really beleeve, and (in ſome way or other) contend that they are in the truth; and that the Religion of others, ſo far as it differs from theirs, is at leaſt erronious?

This is no new thing, for thus it was at the appearing of *Chriſt* in the fleſh, between the *Samaritans* and the *Jews*, and alſo among the ſeveral ſorts and ſects of the Jews. Yea likewiſe in the Apoſtles times, There were thoſe that were puffed up, who made ſlight of all that the Apoſtles taught, and would undertake to deliver that which was more ſubſtantial, more pure, more high, more ſpiritual: They would teach the truth, the ſubſtance of that, whereof that which the Apoſtles taught was but a ſhadow.

Now the Apoſtle ſheweth the way which he would take to diſcover the rottenneſs and deceit of theſe perſons, verſ. 19. He would apply himſelf to know *not their ſpeech*, but *their power*: He would not regard the beauty and glory of their ſpeech or of the things ſpoken, which is exceedingly taking to a fleſhly eye; but the vertue, the life, the ſpirit of what was ſpoken: He would ſearch into the nature, into the root, into the vertue, into the truth of the thing, and ſo would he prize it in himſelf, and diſcover it to others as he found it there, and not have any eſteem of it becauſe of its flouriſhes, or its ſeemingly pure and ſpiritual luſtre. And he gives the reaſon of this his intended courſe or manner of proceeding in theſe words, *For the Kingdom of God is not in word, but in power*. The Kingdom of God conſiſts in the one, and not in the other. All this great appearance of Glory, of Spiri-

Spiritualify, of Life, of Liberty, *&c.* may be without the Kingdom, therefore what ſhould I regard them for? to what end ſhould I look after them? This is the way to deceive my ſelf with an appearance, with a flouriſh, in ſtead of truth. But where ever the true power is, to be ſure there is the Kingdom. Therefore I will lay aſide all conſideration of the other, and mind how much of that is in them.

Towards opening of the phraſes, three things would be enquired into, namely, Firſt, What is meant by Kingdom? Secondly, What by Word? Thirdly, What by Power?

1. *What is meant by Kingdom?*

By *the Kingdom of God*, is meant *the new nature, the new life*, yea and alſo that *new inheritance*, unto which this nature and life leads. There is a new nature deſcending from God, this new nature leads a new life here in this world, and both this nature and life hath a promiſe of a new inheritance in the other world. Or if ye will, if ye think that may be plainer to you, by *Kingdom* is meant *Religion*, true Religion, the Religion which God teacheth his ſeed, the Religion which God writeth in the nature of his ſeed (for there is a Religion alſo which God writeth in the nature of man and teacheth man, but that is not the Kingdom.) In every diſpenſation that *Truth*, that *Vertue*, that *Light*, that *Life*, which cometh down upon the ſeed, ſpringeth up in the ſeed and goeth along with the ſeed, is the *Kingdom*. It is that *breath of God* from which the new nature or principle came, in which the new nature lives, and by which it is perfected. This it is moſt properly, but in a larger ſence it denotes every thing that belongs to the Kingdom, and that not improperly neither, for every thing belonging to the Kingdom hath the nature of the Kingdom in it; and having the nature, why may it not partake of the name? The *Kingdom* of *Iſrael* took in every thing in their diſpen-

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ſation, and the *Kingdom* of *God* taketh in every thing, in the great diſpenſation of his life unto his people, through the Lord Jeſus Ghriſt.

This phraſe *Kingdom* is of very large and full ſignificancy, noting out not only the nature and ſubſtance of the thing together with the extent and limits of it, but alſo the *greatneſs* of it, the *riches* of it, the *glory* of it, the *perfection* of it, the *preſence of God* with it, its *preſence* aud *power* with God, *&c.*

2. *What is meant by Word?*

By *Word* is to be underſtood any outward form of doctrine, any ſpeech, notion or apprehenſion whereby Religion (in any part of it) is either conceived or expreſſed: As, *the doctrine of repentance from dead works, and of faith towards God, the doctrine of ſelf-denyal*, or going out of a mans ſelf, *the Doctrine of obedience* to the inward ſpirit or outward commands of the Word, *the Doctrine of the death of Chriſt, of the Reſurrection of Chriſt*, &c. Word is the outward truth (if I may ſo ſpeak) it is the pipe or veſſel whereby life is held out to man, or whereby it is taken in by man. It was in ſuch Doctrines as theſe forementioned wherein the ſpirit of life did run (as in ſo many veins) in the Apoſtles times. But yet the truth of Religion (*the Kingdom of God*) conſiſts not in any of theſe; Theſe do not bring in the Kingdom, but the Kingdom will of it ſelf bring forth theſe, where it is.

The Kingdom of God, ſaith this ſame Apoſtle in another place, *is Righteouſneſs, and Peace and Joy in the Holy Ghoſt.* But it is not the word of any of theſe, it is not a glorious deſcription or apprehenſion of righteouſneſs, or peace or joy in the ſpirit, it lies not in mighty elevations or raviſhments of heart through the contemplation of theſe, this is *the outward Court* which is given to the Heatheniſh ſpirit of man, which hath this beſtowed upon him for the reward of his pains in theſe things. *But the*

Kingdom of God is not in word. The outward truths of the Gospel (in the most pure, naked, spiritual acception of them) are not the Kingdom, and he that receiveth them only, receiveth not the Kingdom: Man may receive every truth of the Kingdom, Man may fall into any way (nay into every way) of Religion, and yet fall short of the Kingdom.

3. *What is meant by Power?*

By *power* is meant, the *inward vertue*, the *vigor*, the *spirit* which lies in the nature of Religion. In every life there is a vertue or power wherein it consists: No life lieth in the outwardness of its form or shape, but in the inwardness of its nature: The life of man consisteth not in outward knowledg, in an outward form of reason, but in the inward vertue and spirit of reason. Thus it is in the life of Religion, There is an inward vertue, an inward spirit, an inward power in the nature of it, whereby it changeth the vessel whereinto it comes, subjecting the rational part to it self and advancing it in it self, as the rational part doth the brutish. So that as in a rational man, all the faculties of his mind and members of his body are subject to his reason: so in the spirituall man, not only the members of the body and faculties of the minde, but the very spirit of reason it self is subject to this new spirit or principle of life. There is this *vertue*, this *life*, this *spirit*, in every thing of Religion, in all the Truths, in all the Ordinances, Institutions and paths of the Kingdom, and this only is Religion. It is not the knowledg of all the things of God, (alas the prophane spirit of man under a form of holiness may be very exact in them!) but the nature, the vertue of the things themselves, which is preserved entire for the pure; into it no unclean thing can enter: So that where there is the least true power there must needs be true Religion: but there may be all the outward form or fabrick, and yet no true Religion at all. There may be all the truths

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of the Goſpel, all the Ordinances of the Goſpel, all the ways of the Goſpel, and the ſpirit of man walking very zealouſly in all theſe, and yet this is no part of the kingdom: for the Kingdom conſiſts not in the outward letter of the Light, Life or Liberty of the Goſpel, nor in every power and vertue of it, but in the inward ſpirit of it, and in that power and vertue which is peculiar to its own nature. To illuſtrate this a little further; Take notice of a threefold power in reference hereunto.

1. There may be *an outward power concurring with the thing*, as the power of working miracles, the gift of ſpeaking with tongues, of healing, &c. This is demonſtrative in its kind and according to its nature, for elſe the Lord would not have made uſe of it for that end; but yet it is not the power here ſpoken of, not the power which the Apoſtle here reſolved to know.

2. There may be an *inward power forming of the thing*, which may be either *the Spirit of the Lord*, or *the ſpirit of the Creature*, working by and according to its creaturely imagination. By imagination I mean the reaſon or underſtanding of man, which though it be no imaginer, but a certain knower within its own bounds; yet in things of this nature, in the things of God, in the things of the kingdom, it is no knower at all, but a meer imaginer. Now this inward power of reaſon or imagination will make ſtrange fabricks in the mind of man, eſpecially where it hath any ſuperior principle to ſet it on work, or engines to move it, or oyl to ſet it on going. This power, this vertue being inward, is alſo of a more inward ſatisfaction to a man then the former. By the former a man is as it were compelled to beleeve, yet perhaps not at all ſatisfied thereby in the nature of the thing: but by this a man is led into *Faith*, *Love*, *Obedience*, and ſo into every thing that is thus formed in him. The things which the fancy or reaſon of man (for here the reaſon of man is but fancy)

after its manner comprehendeth, are as it were made natural to the man. Now though this be a great power, and can make mighty changes, and do mighty things in the ſpirit of a man, yea and worketh very like the truth, inſomuch as that which is meer man can very hardly, if at all, diſtinguiſh it from the truth, yet this is not the truth neither, this is not the power which the Apoſtle here ſpeaketh of.

3. There is *an inward power or vertue in the thing*, whereby it is what it is, and whereby it does what it does: whereby it is what it moſt naturally is, and produceth its own moſt natural effects. There is a true vertue in truth, an inward power in the Death and Reſurrection of Chriſt, an inward power in faith, in love, and in the ſpirit of obedience, which lyeth in the nature of it, which it diſperſeth and leaveneth the lump with where it is ſown in truth. Now this is it the Apoſtle here means, He will know this power, he will diſtinguiſh by this vertue, the nature and truth of the thing it ſelf. From whence this may be obſerved,

Obſerv. *That true Religion conſiſts not in notion, not in apprehenſion, not in expreſſion, but in the true Nature, Vertue, Life and Power of the thing it ſelf. The Kingdom of God is not in word, but in power.*

Let a man have the cleereſt apprehenſion of the truths of God, and the cleereſt expreſſion of them that may be, yet this is not Religion. If a man have all knowledg, with all the effects of Faith, Love, Zeal, Obedience, &c. which this knowledg can produce in him, yet this is not Religion. The knowledg of ſelf-denial, of reſignation to the will of God, with all the ſelf-denial and reſignation which this knowledg can produce; The knowledg of the Death of Chriſt and of the Life of Chriſt, with all the effects thereof in the ſpirit of a man, neither is this Religion.

Reaſ.

Reaſ. The reaſon whereof is this, becauſe all outwardneſs is but a garment, wherewith Religion may be clothed or not clothed according to the pleaſure of God. Now ye know a garment neither is the thing, nor a certain evidence of the thing. All outward buildings which the ſpirit of the Lord rears, the ſpirit of the Lord may alſo leave, and the ſpirit of man, of Antichriſt, of Satan, may enter into. The Lord hath not yet built *his everlaſting Tabernacle* or *Temple*, and therefore thoſe he doth ſet up (being but ſhadowes) his ſpirit may as well leave, as enter into. So that whatſoever may come into apprehenſion, whatſoever may be brought forth in notion or expreſſion, is not the thing; at beſt it can be but a true garment, but a true appearance, but a true houſe for the thing to be cloth. d with, appear and abide in while the Lord pleaſeth.

But now where there is the nature, where there is the life, where ther is the vertue, wher ther is the power, there muſt needs be the thing. Where there is the life of a man, there muſt needs be a man: where there is the vertue of a renewed nature, there muſt needs be a renewed nature: where there is the power of Religion, the power of the Kingdom, there muſt needs be Religion, there muſt needs be the Kingdom: for this is from it, this is in it, yea this is it. What is the vertue and power of God, but God? what is the power and vertue of any thing, but the thing? The vertue of Religion, the power of the Kingdom, that is it in which the very ſpirit of it is, lives, goeth forth, and reſideth.

Queſt. But what is this ſame nature, life, power or vertue of Religion, wherein Religion conſiſts? This is very neceſſary to be well conſidered; for there is a nature, life, vertue or power in the Religion of man. That which here the Apoſtle calleth word, hath that in it which man calleth power. Let a man receive any apprehenſion into his mind fully, let him but receive it ſeriouſly as the truth

of God, it cometh with a great deal of power, it bringeth vertue with it to make changes in him, changes in his ſpirit, changes in his underſtanding, changes in his will, changes in his converſation: And yet this is not the power which the Apoſtle here looketh after, all this is with him but word. The greateſt inwardneſs of man, is but outwardneſs with the ſpirit of the Lord. What then is this ſame power here, or what is the nature of this power, of this vertue?

Anſw. To this queſtion I ſhall return this threefold deſcription by way of anſwer.

1. For the general nature of it, it is *divinely ſpiritual.* It is not a birth from the ſpirit of man, no nor yet from the ſpirit of Satan, but from the ſpirit of the Lord. There is the true nature, life and power of God in it. It is the ſeed of God, and it brings forth the true nature of God. The Spirit of the Lord begetteth that which is ſpirit. The ſpirit of the Lord bringeth forth a truly ſpiritual Religion in the ſpirit of man, where he ſoweth his ſeed.

2. As touching the common properties of it, It is both *killing and quickening*, and that both in ones ſelf and alſo towards others. In every truth of the Kingdom, in every thing that belongs to the Kingdom, there is that vertue which continually kills and quickens where ever it comes. It kills the ſpirit of man, and it quickens the ſpirit of man. It layeth flat all the corruption, yea all the life and glory of the creature, where ever it appears. It is like a fire, It burns up all the life of every thing it comes neer, and it brings along with it that life which alone can live in that fire. I know man hath his ſeveral waies of killing and quickening by his notions, but it doth not do the thing in truth: for under all the ſeeming deaths of the creature, the creature is ſtill alive; and under all the ſeemingly renewed lifes of the creature, the creature is ſtill dead in its root and principle, yea and alſo

alſo in all its motions and operations.

3. For the peculiar nature of it, That is *ſutable to every particular truth*, to every particular thing of the Kingdom: to every particular truth we receive from God; to every particular thing, portion or member of life which is formed in us. Thus the ſeverall truths of the Goſpel have their own particular natures, The death of Chriſt its, the reſurrection of Chriſt its, *&c.* So likewiſe the ſeveral tempers and graces, in the ſpirits of diſciples, have their particular natures, ſelf-denial its, faith its, love its, and ſo the reſt theirs, whereby they are diſtinct from one another. They all agree in their common nature and properties, and yet have alſo a diſtinct nature and properties of their own, ſutable to that whereof they are formed, and to that peculiar end and operation for which they are formed.

Uſe 1. Obſerve the difference between the Religion of man and of God. Man receiveth his vertue, his ſtrength in Religion, from the outward notion, The power which is found in him iſſueth thence: but in the Religion of God, the ſtrength ariſeth (yea and the notion it ſelf too) from the ſeed. The ſeed ſpringing up in them in whom it is ſown, diſcovereth its own name, teaching them how to call it, by manifeſting it ſelf in them what it is. The *new Adam* knoweth how to name every *new creature*, at the firſt ſight, by his knowledg of its nature.

2. See how eaſie it is for Religion to ſlip in or out of any thing or perſon. This life, this nature, this vertue may creep in or out at pleaſure. The life may fill, appear and live in that in us one day, which the fleſh may fill, appear and live in, the next. The ſpirit of the Lord may rear up and diſcover himſelf in that Temple to day, which Antichriſt may take poſſeſſion of to morrow. Religion, I mean the life of it, conſiſts in the breath of God: not in any outward form whatſoever, but in the breath of God

God there, which when God once withdraweth from any thing, there is no longer the true nature of Religion there to be found; and ever after it is only fit to be a receptacle for the unclean ſpirit of man, which muſt have ſome outward court, ſome appearances of the holy nature and inſtitutions of God to place it ſelfe in. But the true nature and uſe of the thing is then loſt, that ſpeech referring to the natural ſtate of the creature, is here true alſo, *Thou withdraweſt thy breath, they periſh.*

3. Take notice of the proper way of diſcerning the truth and growth of Religion. It is not by having the outward notion, it is not by growing in the outward notion of any thing, as of Faith, Love, Self-denial, Reſignation to Gods will, &c. but by the vertue and growth of the nature of the thing it ſelf. *The Kingdom of God is not in word, but in power.*

VIII. *Of the weakneſs, uncertainty and invalidity of the Fleſh, in reference to the things of God.*

John 6.63.

The Fleſh profiteth nothing.

THe whole Verſe runneth thus, *It is the Spirit that quickeneth, the fleſh profiteth nothing: the words that I ſpeak unto you, they are Spirit, and they are Life.*

In the miniſtrations of God, in the things held forth by Chriſt there is *Fleſh* and *Spirit.* Man, who himſelf is but fleſh, he eyes the fleſh, thinking to drink in light, life and happineſs thence, but that lies not where man looks for it, *viz.* in the fleſh, in the outward reaſon and underſtanding of the thing; but in the ſpirit of it, in the ſpiritual nature and vertue of it. It is the ſpirit of the truth that quickeneth, not the Fleſh of it: Chriſts words in his Light, in his Spirit, are Life and Spirit; in the light of man, to the ear of man, to the underſtanding of man, they are but fleſh.

Fleſh

Fleſh is the principle of Nature, the Root of the firſt *Adam*, and the Garment about the ſecond *Adam*. *Spirit* is the principle of Grace, the Root of the ſecond *Adam*, the new principle of life ſown in and renewing the old earth of God. Fleſh denotes weakneſs, outwardneſs, proneneſs to pollution and corruption: Spirit denotes ſtrength, inwardneſs, purity. That which is born after the fleſh, dyes; even Chriſt himſelf ſo born dyes; That which is born after the ſpirit, lives; even the weakeſt creature ſo born lives.

The fleſh profiteth nothing.

There is a fleſhly principle and there is a fleſhly object, neither of which are of any advantage, of any true profit to the end here ſpoken. The fleſh in man is not a profitable principle, the Fleſh of Chriſt is not a profitable object. The eye of the fleſh is not a profitable eye, the ſight of the fleſh is not a profitable ſight, the things ſo ſeen (though otherwiſe never ſo excellent in their own light, in their own nature, yet here) are of no uſe, no benefit at all. The fleſhly object cannot feed the ſpiritual principle, nor can the fleſhly principle feed on the ſpiritual object.

The fleſh is the natural underſtanding of man, take it either with all outward helps of art or, of more immediate revelations from God, both which may very much advance it: This is the principle or eye of fleſh. The object of this eye is all things ſo far as they are liable to it, even the truths of God themſelves; the outward nature of them, the outward reaſon of them is fleſh. (Fleſh is Gods eye, an eye of his making, and therefore it can be no diſparagement to God to have it ſee the things of God in its own Religion.) Now this natural underſtanding, this fleſhly principle, the eye of man is uncapable of receiving any thing that is ſpiritual from all the outward teachings of God; nor can the truths of God, the true

nature of the things of God enter into man any such way as he looks for them. *The Kingdom of God commeth not by observation*, The spirit of the Lord entereth not into a man at the eye of his spirit. Man indeed may receive the outwardness of God, the outwardness of his Light, the outwardness of his Life, the outward Gifts of Faith, of Love, &c. Faith of his own element, faith sutable to his own nature (yet do not boast, O man, for who hath received any such thing now?) but he cannot receive the truth, he cannot receive the new life, the seed of the kingdom is sown and groweth up man knoweth not how. Indeed after the Kingdom hath entered into man, and overcome him, and new-molded him, then he also can receive the truth and answer the touches of it, though this is not so properly called a motion of his, as of the life in him. *Nevertheless I live, yet not I, but Christ in me*, saith the Apostle.

So that this Scripture teacheth man in all his highest strains, Let him climb as high as he can with all the revelations and discoveries of God to him, Let him know what he can of Christ, receive what he can from Christ, act what he can towards Christ; All this is to no purpose, it is of no use, it is of no profit. It is true, It is of use in its kind: It is an excellent kind of operation in this broken state of man, and the Lord will make excellent use of it to his end: but to the end proposed by God, and the end which man aimeth at therein, it is of no value. It will not reach that eternall life which man aimeth at.

Observe me equally, I say it is profitable in its kind and in its way, and shall have its reward: but it hath nothing to do with the substance, or with that reward which belongs to the substance, both in respect of its nature and of all the motions of it.

In every dispensation these things are profitable, In the dispensation of the Law to the Jews, In the dispensation of the

the Gospel by Christ, In any dispensation now (in this thick cloudy darkness, which man feels not because he wants senses) such kind of motions are of use here, and shall have their reward hereafter, for God will be just to the nature of man, giving it what it deserves: but it hath nothing to do with that reward which belongeth to the new life and the motions of it.

Great is the mystery of the nature of man, exceedingly hidden from man are the workings of that wisdom and righteousness which is therein, in waies of Religion or devotion towards God. The great principle of the life of it was sown and broken in Adam: yet among these broken reliques there is a continuall motion, progress and regress, especially where there comes forth any thing with life and power to quicken and stir them up. (I do not mean life and power in an extraordinary way, though that also hath been and may again be, but in such a way as is ordinary to and in the common state of man.)

To make this the better evident even to the eye of man (which may see the outward part of this, as well as of other truths) I shall instance in some few very eminent particulars, all which he cannot but acknowledg if he know but himself, or have but had experience of himself herein. But he that is in the dark, and knoweth not neither the life of Christ on the one hand, nor of his own nature on the other, may very easily mistake the one for the other, and confidently bolster up himself in vanity.

1. There is in man a strong desire after God, fain would he know him, fain would he enioy him, fain would he worship and serve him. If he knew which way to please God, he would lay out himself to the utmost, he would spare no cost, *Wherewith shall I come before the Lord, and bow my self before the high God? &c.* Micah 6. 6. Man in his very frame was a vessel fitted for God, fitted to be a living house for him, and cannot but most naturally long for

his proper inhabitant: He was made to serve, worship and honor God (other creatures have neither such a capacity nor such an inclination) and he can never be well till he come to the thorow use and exercise of this his nature.

2. There is also in him a strong sense of his own weak state. He knoweth that he cannot come neer God; that he cannot converse with God, that he cannot enjoy God in this state and capacity wherein now he is. He knoweth that he cannot learn the knowledg of God, unless God condescend to teach him in a way suitable to his present estate. Man is such an intelligent vessel, as that he hath a sense of his own broken condition. Man after his many shaterings yet hath so much understanding left him, as in part to espy out his own brutishness in the things of God. He seeth, he feeleth his darkness, and that he cannot reach that light wherein his life lieth.

3. There is a great breathing in his spirit after the teachings of God, fain would he hear the true voice, fain would he be led by God into light and into life. O how he pants, O how he breaths after God, after the living God! A formal dead knowledg of God will not serve the living nature of man: but as the life sown in him is true life in its kind, so it must have true life to feed upon. Yet all this kind of life is death, the whole strength of the natural life is dead before that which is spiritual. Those objects which are living objects, those motions which are living motions, that principle which is a living principle in the region of man, are all dead in the light and Kingdom of God. So that man lives and moves truly in his way, but not in the truth: that which is life, that which is truth with him, is not so before God, nor before that eye which is lighted by God in the truth.

Man, The flesh, The wisdom of the creature, will enter into any way either of life or death that the Lord shall prescribe, he will come within the lists of the Law, and all that

that the Lord commandeth him there, will he do: He will come within the lists of the Gospel, and live upon and obey God through Christ. It is natural to man, as to feel the want of Gods teachings and to desire them, so to follow them. Though this is also true that there is a corrupt principle (or corruption hanging about his natural principle) which maketh him juggle, so that he doth not walk evenly with God in any path. Yet this is also as true that there is a natural principle which inclineth him to seek God, and to be subject to him in every way he shall please to prescribe, though through its own weakness, and the corruption that hangeth about it, it can rise to no great height. It doth rise indeed often very high in mans esteem (insomuch as he accounteth his devotion very high, pure and spiritual) but it is not so in the true Light and judgment of God.

Yea, 5thly, The spirit of man will sow all his life and his death so often as he finds any flaw in it. If this or that present strain of *Religion* appear faulty he will throw it away: and if the next prove faulty likewise he will throw away that again. The flesh seeking that which is substance, cannot but part with that which upon search it finds not to be substance. This is little thought of, how eagerly the spirit of man will into the fire again and again that he may be purified, how industriously he will seek out the cross of Christ, and pray to God to crucifie him upon it, that so he may dye the Death of Christ and live the Life of Christ. So far as the path of Christ is visibly excellent to mans eye, and necessary to the end he aims at, the nature of man (so far as it is it self) cannot but pursue it.

Yet all this profiteth nothing. All this desire after God, all this sense of himself and his own condition, all this breathing of his after the true teachings, all this seeking of life and death, and all this giving up both of life and

death, that it may become a new ſeed, loſing its old nature, form, ſhape and corruption, All theſe motions of fleſh, all theſe motions of mans ſpirit profit nothing. It is true, All theſe are very excellent and very profitable in their own place and ſtation, but here in this place, in reference to this end, they profit nothing.

For firſt, Theſe are not of the right kind. What ever of theſe come from man, or grow up in the meer nature of man, are not the truth. This is not the right ſeed, nor is this the right earth wherein the right ſeed is ſown. This is but the nature, but the wiſdom, but the righteouſneſs of the firſt Adam: nay although it were ſtirred up by the ſpirit of the Lord in man, nay though breathed again from Heaven, yet it would be no other. This is not the nature, not the life, not the breath of the ſeed: The ſonlike ſpirit and motions are only ſown and grow up only in the ſon. The true deſire after God, the true waiting for him, the true repentance, faith, love, *&c.* grow only in him who is begotten from above in a new nature. The Lord ſoweth the life of his own ſpirit, only in the fleſh of his holy Child Jeſus, and thence alone doth the true nature and motions ſpring up, and there alone are they to be found.

Secondly, They are not true in their kind; They are not in man, ſo as man taketh them to be; They are corrupted, they are not pure. Man doth not ſo truly love and deſire God, as he ſeemeth to himſelf to do: He would not be ſo ready to hear his voice, as he thinks he ſhould be. It is the ſon only that hath the ſpirit of obedience; man is not pure, is not upright, no not in his own kind and way of obedience; Neither is mans ear open to hear God; It is the ſon alone whoſe ear God hath bored, 'tis his ear which he hath *opened to hear as the learned.* Man hath but a bad ear at beſt, and yet (as bad as it is) it is not opened.

Therefore

Therefore all Gods charges against man will be very cleer, when the nature and course of man is made manifest. God chargeth him chiefly with two things, with want of power and with want of will. He cannot come to God though he would, *No man can come to me, except the Father, which hath sent me, draw him*: He would not come to God though he could, *Ye will not come to me that ye might have life.*

There are three great exceptions against man in all he is and does, all which are comprized in this phrase *flesh*, which he that is able to consider the nature and course of man, may easily observe.

1. There is commonly *a corruption*, a core of rottenness in his spirit and in all his motions. He doth not know himself, he is not so honest or upright as he taketh himself to be, nor his actions so just and honorable. He is not truly religious or just, I do not mean spiritually, but in his own kind. He doth not love God, he doth not desire to obey God, he would not be Good if he would; That which is in kind of this nature, is so corrupted that God cannot own it for the thing that man would have it go for and thinks it to be, *O that there were such an heart in them, that they would fear me*, &c. Man deceiveth himself, there is not such an honest obedient heart in him towards God as he thinks for. Of all things man is apt to bless himself in the integrity of his heart; though he is weak, yet his heart is upright, and though he cannot attain to be what he would, yet he hath a true desire in him to walk with God: but God will one day shew him that his heart was never right with him, and that he cannot truly desire to walk with him. And man if he could possibly observe and discern himself, might at some times descry this naughtiness and corruption of his heart in these two particulars. The one whereof is in that he doth not like to have it discovered, but justifie himself against all the discoveries

veries of God. Man doth not like that light that searcheth too far into his hidden iniquity. O how difficult it is to bring a conviction close to the heart of any man! All will confess sin in general, but their peculiar way of wickedness, either in their worshipping of God or in their course and conversations, they cannot endure to have touched: There they stand upon their guard, This is not Pride, this is not Covetousness, this is not Hypocrisie, this is not the persecuting of Christ, this is not Idolatry, but the right way of worshiping God. O read thine own heart and tremble, in that 2 Chap. of *Ieremy*, especially vers. 23. 25. & 34. 35. Man purifieth his heart by his principles, of light and knowledg, he squares his worship, life and conversation to his light and measure by the Word; thus he painteth his *Sepulcher*, not discerning the rottenness and corruption that is still within, notwithstanding all this appearing truth and integrity.

The other is, in that let God set him right in any dispensation, he presently and most naturally turneth from it. He is woond up by God against the hair, but he sinketh down again of himself. He is very difficultly brought to a state of rectitude in any kind, but so far as he is, he very suddenly apostatizeth from. This also is abundantly set forth, *Ier.* 2. vers. 2.3, &c.

2. There is always *a weakness* attending him. If there be not a corruption, yet certainly there is a weakness both in his spirit and motions. If he be in any kind set right at any time, yet his nature is frail. If there be Religion, if there be righteousness in him of any true stamp under any dispensation, yet it is very poor, weak and low. This ye may see plainly in that people of God the *Jews*, Look upon their Religion, their Faith, their Love, there Obedience, *&c.* see what it was. It was wrought in them with much difficulty, They were hardly drawn to it: What ado had God to bring them to any thing!

He

He used many instructions, many miracles, many corrections, much patience, or else he had destroyed them many a time in the furnace, and had never broght them forth. And yet what were they when they were brought forth? Alas a poor frail vessel; a vessel long in making, and yet when made, very brittle. How soon after every right constitution and reformation did they backslide and corrupt themselves! which plainly evidencest he frailty of their state. *They sung his praise, they soon forgot his work*: so weak is man that though he be raised and set up upon his leggs, yet he is not able to stand so.

3. There is in man *a continuall progress towards destruction.* That which is corrupt, God destroyeth, and that which is frail and weak, dyeth of it self: yea its own frail nature inclineth it to that corruption which hasteneth its death. Nothing can act above its nature. *Adam* when he fell, shewed the weakness of his nature, *The Prince of this World* came and found somewhat in him to fasten upon. Frailty is a property of the flesh. Weakness is as proper to the earthly image, as strength to the heavenly. The seed of strength groweth up through weakness unto perfection, and the seed of weakness groweth down from strength (from all the strength wherein it is set and which is set about it) into its own imperfection.

For a close of this, I shall lay down these eight Conclusions following (arising partly, if not wholly from what hath been already asserted in this and the two preceding Chapters) which may both help further to illustrate it, as also to fence it from such corrupt consequences as mans flesh may be apt to draw from some parts of it (singly considered by themselves) to its own prejudice.

The Conclusions or Positions are these.

1. There is in the spirit of man a naturall inclination towards Religion. Mans very nature teacheth him his own weakness, his want of God, his dependance upon him, his ignorance of him, &c. and so putteth him upon seeking

after him, praying to him, relying upon him, &c. Or thus.

There are ſome reliques of the Image of God in man, (which though not unbroken, yet) are not quite raſed out of his nature, whereby he is inclined to aim at and ſeek after that which is naturally excellent, the ſum whereof may be reduced to theſe two heads, viz. *To acknowledg and worſhip God*, and *to be juſt and merciful to the creature*, whereof his neighbor man is the principal part. So that all that can be done in this kinde, even to the utmoſt degree, mans nature inclineth him to purſue, though not perfectly but only in a broken manner, according to his broken ſtate.

2. Theſe reliques of the Image of God in man are more lively and active, when God by any light of his ſhineth upon them, or by any life from himſelf quickneth them. A diſpenſation of Gods according to the Law, much more a diſpenſation according to the Goſpell raiſeth up this broken ſhadow man, making him appear as it were a new thing, by ſtirring, drawing forth and advancing that in him which before lay hid and as it were dead. (For man, though he be dead in reſpect of ſpirituall life, yea and in reſpect of the true and pure nature of his own life; yet there is ſtill a life in him, which he haveing changed the name of (and it alſo being changed in its appearance unto him) thinks to be very pure: and it may goe for life according to the preſent rate of naming things.)

3. There is an owning of man by God thus far, there is a bleſſing of God attending him ſo far as he thus is and acts. This is righteous, this is good in man, that though he be broken, weak and corrupt, yet to cheriſh thoſe withered ſeeds of naturall goodneſs and excellency which ſtill have a being in him though they have loſt their beauty: And the Lord will own man ſo far as he doth thus, for he ſhal not loſe his reward, though this kind of reward

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be as it were of debt, and not of grace. For this reward is due from the nature of God to the nature of the creature, which though it fall ſhort of what it was and of what it ſhould do, yet is ſtill to be owned in what it is and doth righteouſly (though after a broken manner) in this its broken ſtate. Or thus:

This broken Image of God, this nature, theſe motions are excellent in their kind. It is the duty and excellency of man, thus to be and thus to act: And were mans nature and motions more perfect and accurate herein, he could not but be happy and bleſſed in his kind and degree.

4. Yet this nature and all theſe motions are not of the true kind, not of that kind ſpoken of in the Scripture, not of that kind to which the life and bleſſedneſs promiſed there appertaineth: But that life and inheritance belongs to the new ſeed, who are born, not of the nature of the earthly *Adam*, but of the nature of the Son, who *is the Lord from Heaven*; and ſuch are all the powers in their ſpirits, and all the motions of their ſpirits. From this nature they know God, they deſire God, they beleeve, love, pray, wait, hope, &c. and their knowledg, deſire, faith, love, &c. is of this nature.

Again, 5. Though this nature, and theſe motions be excellent in their kind, yet they are no furtherance or advantage in reference to the grace of God or life of Chriſt, which are not diſpenced according to any excellencies of nature, or any thing that the creature is, doth, or can do. Though God who is perfectly good and juſt, cannot but honor and reward every degree of goodneſs and juſtice according to its kind, yet this reward doth not at all belong to the righteouſneſs and excellency of nature, namely to be any furtherance to this other kind of life and righteouſneſs by Chriſt; nay the excellency and righteouſneſs of nature is more oppoſite to the Law of this life and its diſpenſation, then the unrighteouſneſs thereof. He who is

any way cloathed upon, is more unfit for the immediate putting on of a new garment, then he who is ſtark naked.

Nay 6. The motions of mans ſpirit in Religion and civil righteouſneſs, having ſuch an apparant excellency in them, ſtand more in the way of true life, then open wickedneſs doth. The way to life is not by any of this, but by being broken to all this; by being ſtripped of all this excellency, of all this righteouſneſs, of all this life, which is the hardeſt peece of work, for him who is moſt richly clothed. O how difficult, yea impoſſible is it for him, who is rich in this kind, to enter into the kingdom of Heaven!

7. Yet this is not to be thrown away for nothing, but only in ſubordination to a better life. Man is not to forbear worſhipping of God and acting of common righteouſneſs, and to run into all manner of prophaneneſs and wickedneſs, that he might be neerer the Kingdom: but to ſee the emptineſs of them, in all his attainment and exerciſe thereof. And he who is thus in his ſpirit, is poorer, is more ſtripped in the midſt of all his exerciſing of Religion and Righteouſneſs, then he who is given up or giveth himſelf up to all manner of irreligion and wickedneſs.

8. And laſtly. Hence it may appear that God will be juſt in condemning every man, becauſe there is that ſeed of Righteouſneſs in his nature whereby he might be better and do better, (yea and would be ſo, did he not choke it) whereby he might walk more intirely with God in every diſpenſation: for what God diſpenceth to man, he ſo diſpenceth as that man may receive his light and walk with him by vertue of that grace and power of the Lord which cometh along with the diſpenſation. For God dealeth not with man in his diſpenſations, according to what he was in *Adam*, but according to what he now is in his broken ſtate: And ſo he will judge them, the *Heathen* by that law of the light of nature which is yet written in their hearts, the *Jewes* by the light of that law which was

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dispenced to them by the hand of *Moses*; and *Christians* by that light of the Gospel which was dispenced to them by Christ and his Apostles.

But though God is and will be just in judging every man, yet every man is unjust in condemning another, because he hath the same seed of unrighteousness and corruption with his brother, which would lead him aside as it doth his brother, were he every way in his case. So that a man in condemning another condemneth himself, though he doth not see it.

IX. *Of the Certainty of Christ in his knowledge concerning the things of God, and particularly of his well-grounded testimony concerning the way to life, and consequently of the certainty of the knowledg and testimony of his seed, in their generations, they being of the same nature and Life with him.*

JOHN 12. 50.

And I know that his Commandment is life everlasting.

EVery man desires everlasting life, but no man knoweth the way to it, and alas who can guide him? Who knoweth any thing almost in spiritual matters? but as for this great thing, viz. *Wherein everlasting life consists*, or *which is the way to that everlasting life which God hath held out, and promised to his seed*, O how deep and hidden is it!

Yet he that hath the light of God he knows. He that is enlightned by God, he may see God and the way to him, and he may light others out of their darkness, as Christ saith *ver.* 46. *I am come a light into the World, that whosoever believeth on me should not abide in darkness.* He that hath the seed and principle of the life in him, he may understand the touch of that life, he may know the commands of it: and he may speak them here in this world, and tell the world that he doth know what he speaketh.

though the world never was, nor never will be able understandingly to receive this testimony, either from Christ or from any of his seed. But the ignorance and darkness of man concerning the light and knowledge of God, do not make them the more uncertain in that spirit where they truly reside, but they do know the truth and the life, though man cannot know that they know it, *And I know that his Commandment is life everlasting.*

Severall things here would be considered to make way to that observation which ariseth from hence.

1. *What this Commandment of the Father is.*

Ans. The great Commandment of God is *to beleeve on his Son*, or if ye will, *on him through his Son.* It is of this Christ is speaking *ver.* 44. *Jesus cried and said, He that beleeveth on me, beleeveth not on me, but on him that sent me.*

Mans bottom is rotten, therefore God adviseth him to quit it and fasten upon the Rock, for all such and such only shall be saved.

That which God points man to in all his dispensations, yea that which his very nature is pointed to, is life. There is a Command of God in the nature of man, to the nature of man, to seek after life, after everlasting life. There was in the very nature of *Adam* a desire of a more excellent state and injoyment of God then that wherein he was brought forth: and it was not ill in *Adam* to obey this, only he should have stayed there the pleasure of the Lord, and have waited upon his wil and guidance for a remove. And this Command, though it was more full and compleat in *Adam*, yet it is also still written in the nature and heart of every man in its degree, and when God pleaseth to awaken the heart of any man in this respect, he can make it appear and act very livelily there.

There is also a Command concerning the way to life. Mans darkness and impotency is also written both in his nature and in his present state, and there may be also found

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in the nature and ſtate of man, by him that hath a quick eye, a command to repent and beleeve. That natural light which is in man ſhews him ſo much of himſelf and ſo much of his God, as may juſtly incline him to turn from the one and to look towards the other. Thus much of the *Goſpel* (for ſo it is in a ſence, and therefore may bear that name) is written in mans nature, though the thing it ſelf, the *Goſpel* it ſelf, the new nature it ſelf, repentance and faith it ſelf, are the ſeed of *Chriſt*, the ſeed of *Chriſt's* ſowing, the ſeed that ſprings from the Root of his nature; and that repentance and Faith which ariſeth thence is not written in the nature of man. Now mark, In that *diſpenſation* of the *Goſpel* by *Chriſt* (either as it was at firſt given out, or as it hath been in any degree renewed ſince) God doth both open thoſe lights and commands which are in the nature of man (for God taketh into and bringeth forth, in that diſpenſation, ſuch things as were ſown in the nature of man) and alſo lets out a further light and adds further commands proper to that diſpenſation. So that this is the commandment of God two waies.

Firſt, It is the commandment of God to the *new nature*: there is *a law of life* teaching and commanding to that the truth. Its nature teacheth it to *beleeve*, for faith ſpringeth up in its nature: And its nature teacheth it to *repent*; its nature teacheth it to loath this preſent ſtate of man, yea the very excellency of mans nature.

Secondly, There is a commandment of God to the *old nature* both to do it after its kind, to repent, beleeve, and obey according to the law of its life; (for man, who came from *God* and *his Chriſt*, is to worſhip and ſerve God and his Chriſt, in his capacity:) and there is alſo a command to this old nature of man to look up for a *new ſeed*, for the ſeed of *a new life*, that ſo he may do it in truth. Man is to live holily and righteouſly according to the law of his ſhadowy nature and being, and alſo to pant after the ſub-

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stance; though that panting from and according to that nature which is peculiar to the seed, man is not capable of in himself. So that this is *his Commandment*, this is Gods great commandment to both the seeds, to the *natural* and to the *spiritual*, to the *seed of Adam* and to the *seed* of *Christ*; namely, that they pant after and cleave unto him through his Son.

2. *What is the everlasting life which is wrapped up in this commandment?*

Ans. It is a *Life* of a different nature, of a more inward nature, of a more setled and abiding nature then the life of the nature of man in it self is capable of. It is the *Life* which mans life is but a shadow of, and which mans life was broken to make way for. It is the *Life* which was promised long agoe to the seed, even from the begining, and is reserved for their enjoyment at the end. It is a *Life* promised to an incorruptible nature; and as the nature to which it is promised, so the life also which is promised is not capable of corruption, as both the nature and life of man is. It is a *Life* that passeth not away, but purifieth, perfecteth and preserveth the vessel wherein it is sown. It is a *Life* which both indures in it self and leads to that blessed enjoyment of life, in which the seed (and the spirit of man in and through the seed) shall settle and abide for ever. All *Adams* nature, all *Adams* excellency, all *Adams* life, all *Adams* enjoyment, content and blessedness thereby, how soon did it fade! but this *Nature*, this *Life*, this *Principle*, with all the glory and blessedness to which it tends, shall abide for ever. This life was not written in *Adams* nature, or in the command to his nature; but in the command to Christs nature, and to man through that nature. The nature of *Adam* was led aside from the commandment to death, but the nature of *Christ* is led and is guided safely through this Commandment to life, even to that life which alone can satisfie the desire and thirst of his

his nature; even this *Life everlasting* which is here mentioned.

3. *What this same knowledg of Christ here is?*

Ans. This *knowledg* of *Christ* is the comprehension of his own nature, or his comprehending of the thing in his own nature. It is the seeing of it with his own eye, the measuring it in his own understanding. As man measureth natural things (within his reach) by his natural understanding: so Christ measureth spiritual things, in spiritual light, with his spiritual understanding; and what he finds proportionable to the measure of his spirit which is truth, he knoweth to be truth. As man, what he truly measures in the true light of reason, with a truly rational understanding, he knoweth to be truth there: So what Christ measures after his way in this his spiritual Region, he knoweth to be truth here. Christ the true nature, with the true eye, saw the true thing in the true light, so that his light, his knowledg is truth, *I know*, &c. Man proposeth unto himself vain waies, and Satan invents many Devices for him, but God who is truth speaketh truth and proposeth only truth unto him. He proposeth the letter of truth not only by *Moses*, but by the meanest of his Prophets; but by *Christ* the spirit thereof, *The words which I speak unto you they are spirit & they are Life.* Christ as he is the truth in an especial manner, so he hath an especial ministration of it, which he began in his own person, and carried on in his disciples and Apostles: And both he and they had an especial knowledg of the truth that dwelt in them, and which they were chosen out for the service and Ministration of. Christ lay in the bosom of the Father before he came into this world; There he saw things, There he saw this Life and the way to it: And when that knowledg which he had in him before, springs up here in him in this World, he knoweth what it is; He is sure it is that truth which he beheld in God in the days of old, and which now he receiveth quick,

lively, pure and clear from the Spirit of God, in this his new ſtate and ſtation. *And I know that his Commandment is Life everlaſting.* Let this ſeem what it will to you, let it ſeem never ſo contrary to the will of God, never ſo contrary to that diſpenſation of his by *Moſes*; Let it ſeem never ſo ſtrange to all the people of God upon the face of the earth, yet I know that it is the truth, I know that it is the true and the only way to life, even to that Life which was promiſed to the nature of the ſeed, and which the nature of man alſo ſo much deſireth. I know that life is wrapped up in this Commandment, and that they that receive it, receive Life; and that they that follow and obey it in truth (in the true nature, life and ſpirit of it) cannot miſs of life, of Life everlaſting, *And I know that his Commandment is Life everlaſting.*

4. *What kind of Faith is this, what kind of beleeving is this, which contains everlaſting life in it, which draws everlaſting life along with it?*

Anſ. 1. It is *the belief of the ſpirit of man*; for that is it which is exhorted to beleeve, and that is it which is to be ſaved. The Son cometh not to ſave himſelf, but to ſeek and ſave loſt man. It is for him he bringeth forth and layeth down his own Life: but yet that way whereby he ſaves him, is by that Faith which he receives and acts from the nature of the Son in him.

2. Though it be by mans ſpirit or nature beleeving in the Son, whereby he comes to be ſaved; yet this Faith with all the motions of it are comprehended and acted *in the holy Spirit*. Every motion of man that tends to life, is performed in the ſpirit of God. As every thing that is ſpirituall, comes alone from the Spirit: ſo it only lives and moves, and acts aright in the Spirit. All the *repentance, mourning, joy, hope, prayer*, &c. that are Spirituall, as they ſpring from the ſpirit, ſo they grow up and come forth in the ſpirit, *praying alwaies in the holy Ghoſt.*

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3. It is *from a new Root.* The faith that saves is from the new birth. The faith that saves this old nature, springs from a new nature. He that is not *new Born*, hath not an eye to see Life, nor an heart to desire it, nor a foot to walk in the way of it. So that though I said in the first place, it is the beleef of the man, yet that is not primarily and most properly true; for it is the belief of the new Life in the man (which also needeth salvation in this state, wherein it is bred and brought up here in this world:) from whence it entring into, springing up in, taking possession of, and leavening the man, it becometh his also. It purgeth out the old nature of the man, and infuseth this new, insomuch as this is now become the nature and life of the man also. So that not only now *Christ* in the man beleeveth, but the man also beleeveth in and through *Christ* which dwelleth in him, and hath changed him into and communicated unto him his own nature.

The way being thus cleared, the Observation it self will now appear more manifest, which is this.

Obser. *That Christ held out from true light, from certain knowledg, that beleeving is the way to Life.* Christ did not guess at it (or imagin it strongly) as we do at most of the things we speak of, but he knew *that his Commandment is life everlasting.*

The certainty of Christ in the things of God, ariseth from this fourfold ground. First, From *his own nature*, Secondly, From *his union with the Spirit*, Thirdly, From *his Life*, and Fourthly, from *his Light.* Each of these contribute much towards, but all of them together can make up no less then an absolute infallibility.

1. *From his own nature.* The nature of Christ is Divine; He is not of this Earth, but from above. He is begotten by God in his own spirit, He is the truly natural Son of God. Now this nature cannot be deceived, because as it floweth from truth alone, so it is purely truth

in it self, and knoweth not how to entertain or admit of any thing but truth. Its nature is perfectly shut up against every lye and deceit, it naturally turneth from it and thrusteth it away: Its nature hath nothing in it, to receive any thing of that nature, and therefore cannot receive it. Now he which is naturally true and cannot take in a lye, surely he cannot possibly bring forth a lye. Hence ariseth the certainty of all the senses of Christ, and of all the motions of Christ, Namely from their nature: They are of a true, of a perfect kind, and cannot but act truly according to their kind.

2. *From his union with the Spirit.* His nature is not only excellent, right, and of a perfect kind; but it is also in union with the original from whence it sprang. *Adam* might be in union with the root of the flesh (but if he were, yet that root will not preserve its off-spring, therefore he fell:) But Christs nature is in union with the root of the Spirit, therefore he cannot miscarry; both because that root cannot but preserve its seed, and because that nature cannot but be sucking nourishment from the root. (There is no nature might in reason be more independent, in respect of its own excellency and fulness, and yet no nature is more dependent, which ariseth from its constitution, and is its wisdom and safety.) There is absolute certainty in the root, and there is no less certainty in Christ: for the very same certainty, which is in the nature of the root, springeth up in him; yea his nature, being in union with the root, hath also communion with it, insomuch as he enjoyeth the truth there in the time of his light, and is comprehended by it in the time of his darkness.

3. *From his Life.* Christ hath a Life in him sutable to his nature: A true Life, a Spiritual Life, a Divine Life. His Spirit, as it hath the nature, so also it hath the Life of the Spirit of God. All his motions spring from

from his own life, and ſo cannot but be as certain unto him in his kind (yea much more, his life being of a more certain kind) as our motions which ſpring in us from our life, are to us in our kind. We are not certain aboutth e things of God, becauſe our life is not of the ſame nature with the things of God: but he is very certain, becauſe his is. Our knowledg at beſt is but revealed, it is but given in to our life: but his knowledg is natural, it floweth from his life. Hence it is that every thing, every motion unto him is ſo pleaſant and ſatisfactory, namely becauſe it is ſo natural, becauſe it flows from ſuch a power of life. Man attains his skil and underſtanding in divine things by the ſweat of his brows, by the labor and toyl of his ſpirit, and it troubles him much to bring it forth, to defend and manage it: Yea his own heart and Soul (if it be a little awakened and enlarged) cannot but find fault with it: but Chriſts skil and underſtanding ſprings up in him, and flows forth from him, and both in its ſpringing up and flowing forth, anſwers the truth, largeneſs and capacity of his nature.

4. *From his Light.* He hath a proper light to ſee the things of God with; He hath the ſame light with God. As he lives in the ſame Country, breaths in the ſame air, hath the ſame nature, ſpirit and life: ſo he hath the ſame light. He is called *the light*, *Joh.* 1. 7. *John* came for a witneſs, *to bear witneſs of the light*. *He* himſelf *was not that light, but to bear witneſs of that light*, verſe 8. *That was the true light*, verſe 9. The light of men and Angels was a true ſhadow, The light of the Prophets was a true Teſtimony: but he is *the ſubſtance*, He is *that true light*, which all other lights did but ſhadow out and teſtifie concerning. There is an eye proper to every kind of things that is to be ſeen, an eye in every nature ſutable to the nature of thoſe things which it is to behold; and there is alſo a light proper to every eye. Now Chriſt having both

both the eye and the light, how can he chuse but see certainly? Gather up these together.

He that hath a true nature, which hath a true eye in it; He who is in union with the spirit of God, which is truth, and who himself is truth in him; He that hath the true life in him for his motions to spring from, the true life to guide his eye with; And lastly, He that hath the true light to see in, how can he chuse but be certain in what he thus views?

And so his seed, having the same nature with him, the same Spirit, the same Life, the same Light; how can they miss of the same certainty? They cannot but be guided naturally unto the same things, and upon the same terms of infallibility.

But now man, *Adam* take him at his best, who never had this nature, but was from the beginning the earthly man; who never was in this kind of union with the spirit; who never had this life or light in him; how can he understand these kind of things! He may desire to be like God (from a sight of the excellency of his nature, being and life) and fumble about the things of God, but he cannot possibly pierce into them. He may gather many apprehensions into his mind, and approach in his way of reasoning to a certainty, but he cannot reach the truth. He cannot know *eternal Life*, it is beyond the capacity of his nature: He may perhaps reason that there must needs be an eternal Life, and a way unto it; but he cannot possibly conceive what that eternal Life is, nor tread the path that leads to it. But the Son or any of the seed cannot miss of it; for it is written in their nature: That *Spirit*, that *Life*, that *Light* which guides to it, descends of it self upon them, & springs up of it self in them.

Use 1. Take heed of contradicting *Christ* in this Testimony of his, which he giveth out upon knowledg. *Christ* came from God, from the light of God, bringing the light

light of God with him; He tells you the truth here, the true ſtate of things, as he ſaw and knows them to be with God. And this is his Teſtimony, that the preſent ſtate and courſe of things tends to a future, that at the laſt day Life and Death ſhall be diſpenced, and that the only way to life then, is by beleeving now. *Chriſt* teſtified truly and wiſely, He underſtood what he ſaid, He ſpake upon ground, He ſpake what he ſaw by the light and in the boſom of God: Wilt thou from thine own head, from a ſtrong fancy or reaſoning in thine own mind, contradict this, and ſay, There is no ſuch thing?

1. *This is very unworthy.* If thou wilt overthrow the Teſtimony of Chriſt, do it fairly, do it by that which is equal to it, by a light of as deep a nature as his. If thou canſt not ſpeak upon as good grounds as he, do not undertake to contradict him.

2. *It is very unſafe.* Suppoſe (before the Lord) Chriſts ſhould prove a truth, and thine a conceit, what will become of thee? It is not the ſtrength of thy apprehenſion which will then bear thee out. The market is yet open for thee, wherein thou maiſt *buy wine and milk without mony, and without price*: but by this means thou makeſt thy ſelf uncapable of making uſe of thy preſent opportunity.

Uſe 2. Ye who find a need of eternal Life, and a deſire after it; Conſider the ground of this truth, and ſo far as it will carry weight, receive it. Receive it into your natural man, and look up to God to ſow a new nature in you, that ſo it may give new life to your ſpirits. Nay by receiving it, it may become a ſeed: The light we let into our underſtandings if it be of a ſpiritual nature, is of power to change our underſtnadings, into ſpirituality. We little think what life is wrapped up in the outward ſeed of the word (as it ſeems to us) when God engrafts it into the ſpirit: *Receive with meekneſs the engrafted word, which is able to ſave your Soul's.* A principle of

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ſpiritual darkneſs, let in by the ear into the heart, what ſtrange changes doth it make there? and why may not a principle of light be let in the ſame way, and do as much?

Chriſt came to ſave the world, verſe 47. He ſpake theſe words to ſave, he gave out this teſtimony to ſave, and for this end might he alſo leave it in writing: And who knoweth but in the hearing of this ſound, Chriſt may work that faith in him who heareth, which may ſave him? It is not worth the being buſied about this world, though a man were ſure to obtain it: but it were worth the being buſied here, though a man were ſure to loſe his labor: for it is noble and excellent to purſue that which is excellent, though one ſhould miſs of it.

X. *Of the Liberty of the Kingdom, which was outward and ſhadowy in that diſpenſation of the Goſpel by Chriſt and his Apoſtles, but inward and ſubſtantial in the true ſeed, both before, then, and after that diſpenſation, yea and for ever: which Liberty, although it be very large, yet is limited by the Law of its own Life and Nature.*

GAL. 5. 13.

For, brethren, ye have been called unto Liberty; only uſe not Liberty for an occaſion to the Fleſh, but by love ſerve one another.

Liberty is the right temper and poſture of the new life, whereby it both is and enjoys it ſelf. It is the breaking all bonds aſunder and ſetting of the heir free. It is the inveſting him with his inheritance, and the leaving of him to the direction and diſpoſe of his own underſtanding and will, which (he being grown up in the Lord) are of ſufficient light, wiſdom and ſtrength to guide him in the Lord. There is in it (or by it) the removal of all Tutors,

Tutors, of all Governors, of all Laws, of all kind of discipline in every kind, which was proper for his nurture and education when his life ran low, but is now no way convenient when he is come to his full age and growth. Now it is necessary for his life to be free in its nature, circuits and motions. He being grown up, his life being come to it self, it is requisite it should have the honor of disposing of it self, of becoming a rule and guide to it self; nay if it be truly strong and compleat in its nature, it can need no rule, no bonds, no bounds but it self, but its own nature. So that this is Liberty, when the nature of a thing is not circumscribed by any Laws or limits whatsoever, but it hath its full scope to the utmost for the exercise of its nature, This I say is Liberty, full Liberty, compleat Liberty, perfect Liberty.

There is no such Liberty in this Life or flowing from this Life, as the corrup tnature of man seeks, namely a Liberty to satisfie the corruption of his nature, and that this should not be sin, nor subject to the lash or censure of any Law, nor able to bring any death or danger upon him: But this Liberty is pure and holy, like the nature and life from which it flows, and hath in it that which answers every Law of righteousness in every kind. There is no Liberty here not to love God, or to neglect any Duty of Love, Holiness and Obedience which his nature and will calls for; no Liberty to be unrighteous or unmerciful either to man or to the meanest creature: but the Liberty of this life is perfectly holy, sweet and just. It is a Liberty from all manner of corruption and unrighteousness, and a Liberty unto all purity and righteousness. It is a Liberty like that which is in the Nature of God, who can do nothing that is evil, nor neglect the doing of any thing that is good.

Gods Liberty lieth in two things. First, He is free only to his own nature, nothing can incline him any way,

but his own nature, but his own understanding and will which is from and according to his nature, or which is his nature. Secondly, In his own nature is comprehended the accurateness and perfection of all that righteousness, holiness and sweetness, which any dispenced Law darkly shadows out. So that by the presence, by the purity of the substance he is freed from the shadow. Now the Liberty of the Seed is a true copy of this: As their nature is a true extract from the Nature of God, so is their Liberty from his Liberty. Their nature being thus, in, with and from God, holiness and righteousness being their very nature, it must needs be the Liberty of their nature thus to be and thus to act. For Liberty of the nature, is suitable to the nature, not contrary to it. All the Liberty which crosseth the nature and truth of Life, is but a false appearance (how specious soever) but is not true Liberty. If a man had his reason at perfect Liberty, he could do nothing that were irrational, nor neglect the doing of any thing that were rational: So is it in this Life, its Liberty lies in being free in its own state, nature and course; Not in being free to, but in being free from all impurity of flesh and spirit. It is the Liberty of the Lord to be free from sin, weakness and folly: Not in that he can do the same things which sinners do, and not sin; but his Nature, Life and Spirit will not permit any such motions to have any place in him. He is free from the root which bears such fruit. And when his seed are redeemed, they shall perfectly know and enjoy this Liberty with him; for neither their spirit nor their flesh shall return any more to folly.

There is a threefold *Liberty* which are wrapped up within one an other. A *Liberty* of the *nature of the creature*, A *Liberty* of the *nature of man*, and A *Liberty* of the *nature of the new man*, which being grown unto perfection, restoreth the Liberty of man and of the creature, bringing

bringing it forth a new in it ſelf. *Adam* by his fall, brought both himſelf and the Creation into bondage with him; into which bondage the Son enters (or in this depraved and loſt Earth the ſeed of Life is ſown) who by breaking through theſe bonds (which it doth by the power of its Life; for though this life may ſubmit unto, yet it is impoſſible it ſhould be held down by the Law or the curſe) redeemeth both *Adam* and the Creation. This leaven entring both into the man and into the creature, ſpreads both over the man and over the creature, and by breaking its own bonds, breaks the bonds both of man and the creature; and by challenging, aſſuming and poſſeſſing its own Life and Liberty, bringeth man and the creature into Life and Liberty: ſo that though their Life and Liberty is utterly loſt in themſelves, yet it is found again in Chriſt, and found more pure, more perfect, more ſtable there, then ever it was in them. (Happy is that man, happy is that creature which can find the way to true loſs, to true bonds; but that is as impoſſible to man, to the creature, as it is to it to ſave it ſelf.)

And this is calling into Liberty, (*Brethren, ye have been called unto Liberty*) namely the breaking forth of this life in the man, which wrapping the man up in it ſelf, and bringing the man forth again with it ſelf, maketh him both taſte of a new nature and of his own nature anew. I confeſs *calling* here in this place, may denote that invitation and inlet into the viſible ſtate of the Goſpel (which then was uſual) which in compariſon of the ſtate of the Law, was a ſtate of great Liberty; though in reſpect of true thorow Liberty it be a ſtate of great bondage, and the ſpirit of life in the ſeed did groan under it for want of freedom, as well as it did in the Saints of old under the yoke of the Law. But *calling into Liberty*, in the true nature of it, is the advancing of the new nature (which nature is ſown here in bonds) into the poſſeſſion and en-

joyment of it ſelf, and the redeeming of the nature of that man in whom the new nature is ſown, out of the bonds either of its own corruption or of any diſpenſation of God, wherewith it is exerciſed in this its corrupt and enſlaved eſtate. So that in this Liberty, Firſt, There is a free ſpirit or nature begotten and brought forth. Secondly, There is a ſpreading of this over the man, conveying into him or taking him into the ſame free nature. Thirdly, There is the advancing of both into a free ſtate, and the bringing forth of the creature in and with them both.

Now perhaps ſome may yet in truth of ſpirit deſire to hear ſomewhat more particularly and diſtinctly concerning this Liberty; that they might have a more diſtinct and demonſtrative view of ſome things which have been already glanced at; for whoſe ſatisfaction, Firſt, I ſhall touch a little at mans ſlavery, and then propoſe to conſideration the principal parts of this freedom.

Mans ſlavery conſiſteth chiefly in theſe three things.

1. *He is enſlaved to himſelf*, or to the Law of ſin and death which dwels in him, which is now become himſelf. His *underſtanding* is a ſlave to dark and corrupt principles, his *will* to vain and deſtructive deſires. That little *reaſon* that is yet remaining in his underſtanding and will, is a ſlave and ſubject to the Law and curſe of that corruption which dwels in him.

2. *He is enſlaved to Satan*; He rules him at pleaſure. This world, the whole ſtate of this world, the whole frame and motions of mans ſpirit, all the powers and operations of his nature, lie *in that wicked one*, and are diſpoſed of by him. So that man cannot ſee the true light, not of reaſon, *becauſe the God of this world blinds his eyes*; nor can he obſerve or obey what he doth diſcern of good (further then God winds him up and aſſiſts him by ſome power, which ſometimes he lets forth upon him in a diſ-

penſation,

penſation, which for that ſeaſon refreſheth the ingenuity and integrity of his nature, ſetting it on work for God and towards good, but otherwiſe the ſpirit of man ſtands at a diſtance from that light of Holineſs and Righteouſneſs that ſhines upon him in any of the diſpenſations of God) becauſe *Satan* binds his heart, his hands, his feet, his whole man. So that there is no true liberty in the freeſt nature or cleareſt reaſon, (*Satan* doth but cozen a man in making him beleeve, either that he can or will diſpoſe of himſelf according to the light of reaſon:) but only in thoſe whom God by his wiſdom, love and pleaſure turneth *from darkneſs to light, and from the power of Satan unto God.*

3. *He is enſlaved to Laws, Ordinances and Obſervations,* either ſuch as were written in his own nature (which yet have a dark being and reſidence there, and which God can ſtir up at any time for any end or deſign of his) or ſuch as are diſpenced to him in ſuch or ſuch a ſtate. Thus God hath pleaſed to uſe many waies for the exerciſe of man in his preſent broken condition. Thus the *Jews* were exerciſed with ſeverall *Laws and kinds of Diſcipline,* and ſo alſo the *Gentiles* or beleeving *Chriſtians* after them: The former of theſe was a ſtate of great ſlavery, and the latter was not a throughly free ſtate, though it might very well be accounted free in compare with the former. There was indeed a true taſte of the truth in that State, but the State it ſelf was not the truth (but only a more compleat ſhadow then the Law) and therefore muſt vaniſh and give way whenſoever the truth appears. This is the ſum or main of the ſlavery of man, whereunto the ſeverall inferior parcels of it may be referred.

Now *the freedom of the ſeed,* and of *Man* and the *creature* in, with and through the ſeed, lieth chiefly in three things alſo. To let paſs *freedom from corruption and vanity*

nity, which though it be wonderfully excellent, and not to be found in the air where we breath, yet that may ſo eaſily be ſuppoſed and is ſo fully comprehended in the other, as I cannot but omit it: Therefore to let that paſs, I ſay freedom conſiſteth in theſe three things.

1. *In a diſobligation from all Laws of an inferior nature.* That man cannot be free who is in ſubjection to any laws or ordinances of an inferior nature, ſpirit, or principle then his own life is. The Lord hath given laws and ordinances to man in his ſeverall ſtates and conditions, all which the life advanced to its own proportion of liberty in Chriſt is free from. They who are truly dead with Chriſt, are freed by that their death, from their former husband the law. The life which was married to it died and hath been laid in the grave, and there is no marrying or giving in marriage any more (even in this ſence) in the grave or after the Reſurrection. The life having dyed in that ſtate and diſpenſation wherein it was brought forth and placed, that it might fulfil it and dye; and having ſlain the man alſo with it, yea the very root and ſpirit of his life: If either or both riſe up any more, they riſe up free: They can riſe no more under the law of that diſpenſation, to which they were ſlain.

So that the life in liberty is as it were *a Lord* over all the diſpenſations of God; which as they are of an inferior nature to this life, ſo it is their proper place to be in ſubjection to it. He in whom the life lives & reigns, may in or out at pleaſure, uſe them or leave them, as the light and pleaſure of the nature of this life directs him. He may take any of them, and ſeem bound under them, though in himſelf he is ſtill free: he may leave them off again, and manifeſt his own freedom, when he ſees his time. *All things are lawful for me*, ſaith the Apoſtle, *but all things are not expedient*: as if he had ſaid, I can do any thing, I can uſe any thing, but yet withall I know my time: My ſpirit which knoweth

knoweth the greatneſs, the largenes of my liberty, knoweth alſo how to manage it. And he ſhews as much in his practiſe, for though at one time he could ſhave himſelf and enter into the *Temple* in a way of legal *purification*, yet at another time when certain crept in to eſpy out his Liberty, he would not *give place by ſubjection, no not for an hour*, but would maintain his Liberty in the very face of them. He could make uſe of *circumciſion* himſelf by vertue of this Liberty (for he *circumciſed Timothy*) though he tells the *Galathians*, that if they were circumciſed, *Chriſt* would profit them nothing.

Nor is this Liberty reſtrained to the life in it ſelf, but ſinks with the life into the man. All things were made for man, (All *Creatures*, all *Ordinances*, all *Laws*, all *Inſtitutions*, and *Commandments*,) not man for them, as Chriſt ſaith particularly concerning the Sabbath, *The Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath*; and when man comes to his right place, he ſhall be above them all, and they ſhall all be ſubſervient to him, for whoſe ſervice, uſe and diſcipline they were made. It is true, Man in his preſent eſtate is a ſervant under them and enſlaved by them; yea the life it ſelf, though by the right of its own nature it be far more free, yet for a ſeaſon it may lie under greater bonds, then man in his condition of ſlavery hath yet taſted: but when *the Son* groweth up to *his freedom*, he becomes *free indeed*; yea, and that man whom he maketh free, is free alſo. But it is a great vanity for any to dream of, and to think to make uſe of and live according to this freedom, before it be truly brought forth in them. It is not by having the cleer notions and apprehenſions of Liberty, or by taking ſcope to themſelves according to theſe notions, that men become free: but it is by the nature, growth, and advancement of the true life in them, from and according to the true light and Power of the Spirit of the Lord.

Lord. The former is but poor mans aſpiring into a ſtate into which he is not rightly led, which tends to greater bonds: The other is a fair paſſage through and from under bonds, to which, that perſon who is once ſet free by the truth, ſhall never be reduced; For the Lord will maintain that Liberty, unto which his own Spirit, Life and Power exalteth. This is the Firſt thing wherein Liberty conſiſts, a diſobligation from all Laws and Ordinances inferior to the nature or life which is bound by them.

2. Liberty conſiſts *in an exemption from all powers of a Superior nature.* If Satan may be ſuppoſed to be ſtronger then the life (as he is, compared with the life in its weakneſs, though he that then ſtands by the life and taketh care of it, is ſtronger then Satan,) yet the life ſhall be free from him: The life which deſerves to be called free, muſt be out of the reach or fear of his claws. The life is not free which Satan may interrupt, or at leaſt not while he may interrupt it. Satan muſt down when the life ſprings up. God will trample down Satan before the preſence of the life, nay under the feet both of man, and the creature, when the life appears in them. *The God of peace will tread down* the troubleſome ſpirit of *Satan*, under the ſpirits yea and under the fleſh too of all his Saints, in the day of their freedom. Nay the very *Power of God*, ſo far as it was dreadful to Chriſt and to his Saints (for they have always complained of that, as the moſt terrible thing which they have had to deal with, and indeed it is that that chiefly afflicteth and ſlayeth them in the hour of their ſickneſs and death, though all the time of their life it was their chief ſupport) I ſay *this power* they muſt be ſecured from too in the day of their Liberty. God will not now interpoſe any more with his exerciſes, as he formerly did in his time of nurturing the life; but henceforth there iſſueth nothing from him, but what anſwereth

ſwereth the nature and deſire of the life.

3. Liberty lyeth (and that moſt of all) *in the cleerneſs, ſtrength and perfection of life*: in the temper of the ſpirit: in the nature, life and growth of the ſpirit. If the ſpirit were never ſo free from all Laws on the one hand, and from all powers on the other hand, yet if it failed of cleerneſs, ſtrength or perfection of life, it could not be perfectly at liberty. If it want either light or ſtrength of life to move with, it cannot but fall ſhort in its motions; and though it were never ſo free in other reſpects, yet it would ſtill be bound up in the darkneſs, weakneſs and imperfection of its own nature. If mans reaſon were free from all Laws and bonds whatſoever, yet if it were not full in its own nature, if it wanted either light or ſtrength in its kind, man could not be free either in the exerciſe or enjoyment of his natural principle: And this holds alſo in the ſpiritual principle, Its Liberty lies in the perfection of its nature; therefore though he may have a taſte of it before, yet he cannot be fully free, until he be brought forth in perfection. There muſt be a cleer ſpirit within, a cleer courſe and paſſage for the ſpirit, cleer light about the ſpirit, and full ſtrength and vigor in the ſpirit, or there cannot be a through freedom. If the ſpirit have any clouds, any darkneſs about it ſelf, it is not free: If there be any rubs in its way it cannot walk freely (therefore God promiſeth to this life an high way, a plain path in the day of its redemption and freedom, as *Iſai.* 35. 8.) If its light be not very full and cleer, and its ſtrength abſolutely perfect in reference to its own nature and ſtate, it will want of its Liberty, it will not be able to come forth or walk in perfect freedom. So that that Liberty which is perfect and compleat, muſt be of a perfect ſeed, from a perfect root, perfectly grown up and ſcituated in the life and Spirit of the Lord, from which alone it proceedeth and groweth up, and in which alone it can live and be enjoyed.

It hath been and ſtill is a great queſtion, *how far thoſe that are in Chriſt are freed from the Law*; and *whether their ſins be againſt the Law or no, or only againſt Chriſt who is their Life and Law?* In relation whereunto (ſince it falleth ſo fairly in my way) I ſhall lay down three Concluſions, which may occaſion the cleering of it in part, and the further better right underſtanding of this Liberty: wherewith I intend to conclude the point, only adding ſomewhat concerning the abuſe (which it is very liable unto, as every other ſpiritual thing alſo is, in the way that hitherto it hath broke forth and appeared) and right uſe of Liberty, from the following words. The Concluſions are theſe.

1. He that is in Chriſt cannot ſin againſt the Law, becauſe he is not under it, and therefore cannot be bound by it, nor be engaged to give any account unto it. He is under another husband, and therefore free from this, as the Apoſtle reaſoneth, *Rom.* 7. But yet mark, As Chriſt himſelf in his fleſhly ſtate was under the Law (who was the forerunner and pattern:) ſo all his ſeed in their fleſhly ſtate are under the Law likewiſe. They may have ſometimes a ſight of life and a taſte of liberty; but until they have followed Chriſt into his grave, and are become dead with him, yea and riſen with him too, they ſhall not enjoy it. While the life lives in the fleſh, it lives under the Law: when the life comes to live in the ſpirit alone, it ſhall be perfectly freed from the Law.

This is moſt certain, The life of its own nature is not under the Law, nor can its nature (to ſpeak properly) be ſubjected to the Law, though it may act a part of ſubjection for a ſeaſon: yet in the acting of that part, the ſparklings of a diviner life and Law (which ſwallow up this weak life with the whole Law of it) cannot but now and then appear, as they did in Chriſt, in the time of his

his subjection and servitude. But the man in which the life inhabits, and through which the life acts, is weak, and hath only a promise of strength and of redemption with the life, after his death and resurrection with it, but hath not any full sense or participation of it, but is to remain under bondage, and to travail up and down in the wilderness of this worldly state with the life until then. And though in the Apostles times the Lord did let out both this life and this liberty, into the humane nature in his Saints, to give a little glimps what they were; yet they were let forth but weakly, and they were soon clapped in again, and the old husband (the Law) returns and takes universal possession again, though under the name of the life and Liberty of the Gospel.

This then is the sum. To all men whatsoever, until they be swallowed up into the spirit of Christ, the law is still a Schoolmaster: and they may find, if they observe themselves, the Law of nature or the Law of good and evil, which is written in their hearts by nature, and further revived by acquired knowledg (whether from the light springing up in man, and so received thence, or from the light held forth in the Scriptures) continually instructing and discipling of them. As a Schoolmaster it exerciseth them as its Disciples and Schollars. Yea in the very times of the Apostles, though they had attained a strain of freedom which was not attained before, yet they were not altogether free; but groaned under bondage and panted after Liberty.

2. He that is in Christ cannot do that which the Law judgeth to be sin. He cannot act against the righteousness that is in the Law. He can no more live to sin, then he can live to the Law. He hath as little to do with any thing which the Law judgeth evil, as with the Law it self. He can give no offence to any that have any true light in them, for he can do nothing against any true light in any

kind. This is the nature of truth; It longeth for, it ſeeketh after, it knoweth, it embraceth both its own image and its own ſubſtance: Truth in the image longeth after the ſubſtance, Truth in the ſubſtance comprehendeth, acknowledgeth and embraceth the image. The righteouſneſs which is in Chriſt and his ſeed, in its nature, motions and actions, comprehendeth the righteouſneſs of the Law. Indeed it cannot be comprehended by it, but it comprehends it; and the righteouſneſs of the Law knoweth it and giveth way to it. It hath more in it, a far higher kind of righteouſneſs then the Law calleth for, but it hath that alſo. Every ſpiritual motion is beyond the nature and excellency of the Law, but yet it hath all that excellency that the Law can poſſibly expect or exact, and therfore cannot offend againſt the life or truth of the Law. The life and righteouſneſs that is in Chriſt, moſt naturally cheriſheth the life and righteouſneſs that is in the Law, which they who taſte of *the truth as it is in Jeſus*, are taught to underſtand.

3. If he could poſſibly do that which the Law judgeth to be ſin, yet his ſin would not be directly againſt the Law (for the Law cannot judg him as a ſinner, who is not under it) but againſt his own life; which is a greater offence, and hath more of the nature of ſin in it, then if it were againſt the Law. He that is in Chriſt hath a new life in him which is ſown in his ſpirit, and his ſpirit with that life is tranſplanted into Chriſt, who is his Lord and Lawgiver: And what he now is, he is in Chriſt; and what he now does, he does unto Chriſt, and is not now any longer under that diſpenſation of the Law, in which he was before his tranſplantation: ſo that he is not henceforth ſo much as in a capacity of ſinning againſt it.

This then is the ſum. They that are in Chriſt, (in his Spirit, dead and riſen with him, who are entred into

to

to and ſwallowed up in the newneſs, Vertue, Life and Power of his Death and Reſurrection) are not ſubject to the Law of any diſpenſation (though they can alſo fulfil any, yea and are to fulfil the Law of every diſpenſation:) but only to the Law of pure nature. Nor can they properly be ſaid to be ſubject to that, for of it ſelf it floweth from their nature, aud that in a way of ſubjection to them, ſo that they may be rather ſaid to be Lords over it. All the diſpenſations of God with all the Laws of them, flow from that life which is in Chriſt and his ſeed, from which life they come, in which life they are comprehended, to which life they are inferior and owe ſubjection: And though the Lord exerciſe his Son under them for a ſeaſon, ſo that they are above and he below, they Lords and he a Servant under them; yet when the heir is grown up to his age, underſtanding and liberty, it cannot but be otherwiſe. And this is the right and proper ſtate and poſture of things (whereas all things are now out of order, the firſt laſt, and the laſt firſt) when every inferior nature is comprehended in and ſubject unto the ſuperior: When the ſenſitive part is ſubject to the rational, the rational to the ſpiritual, the ſpiritual to the divine: The creature to man, man to Chriſt, Chriſt to God.

And when this is effectually ſprung up, brought forth, and perfected, then cometh the Kingdom, the univerſal Kingdom, the Kingdom both of God, of Chriſt, and of man. Then *God* ſhall reign, when he hath pitched his *Tabernacle*, built up his *Temple*, erected his *Throne and Kingdom* wherein he will reign: When he hath taught his Son and his creature perfect ſubjection to himſelf, then will he reign in them both. Then *Chriſt* ſhall reign; When he is become perfectly ſubject, when he hath throughly learned obedience by the things that he hath ſuffered, and hath given up his life to the will of the Fa-

ther, and lain in the grave during his pleasure, Then will the Lord at length raise him up to the Crown, give him the Kingdom, set him at his own right hand, and he shall reign henceforth in God and with God. Yea, When *man* hath learned this lesson from Christ, and hath laid down his life also and buried it in the grave of Christ, and there let it lie the time of Christs pleasure, Then will Christ also at last raise him up in his own life (even as God raised up Christ in his life) and he shall reign in Christ, and with Christ in God for ever and ever. And now tell me, ye that have skill, which is the most Honorable of these, Gods reigning in Christ and in man, Christs reigning in God and in man, or mans reigning in God and in Christ. Surely God will manifest his skill in imparting himself wholly and fully to his Christ, and Christ will shew the same skill (and will not fall short in it) of conveying all to man that God imparts to him. If the whole river cannot run intirely and perfectly every where, it will not be satisfied in it self; it will not be able to satisfie the desire of its nature, which is, after this manner, to empty it self. The Lord will sow liberally, that he may reap liberally; Nor is it any dishonour to him, for us to see, acknowledg and hold forth the greatness, Excellency and Majesty of him in his seed. Hitherto the Worshiping even of God by the mouths and in the spirits of most men, hath been Idolatry: but hereafter ye shall see man worshipped without Idolatry. When the Lord clotheth the flesh of his seed with his own Spirit, the spirit of man so soon as ever he beholds it, shall fall down before it: Yea *all the Angels of God shall worship him.* The meanest Life of Christ in the lowest of his seed (if any thing here may be termed mean or low) shall deserve the greatest worship of the highest Angels.

Only use not Liberty for an occasion to the flesh.

The *flesh* will be entring into all the spiritual things of God,

God, but it is only into the flesh of them, and to serve the flesh by them.

This they who are the seed, in the true nature, cannot do: and they who are advanced to be a type or representation of the seed in any dispensation (and so have a taste of the nature, life and liberty of the seed) are carefully to avoyd the doing of it, in that dispensation wherein they are placed by the spirit of the Lord. The spirit of life in the seed cannot do thus (This is clean contrary to the nature of that life;) nor the humane spirit neither so far as it dwells in, and is comprehended by that life. But that which is but spirit in a type, or by vertue of a dispensation, but is still flesh at root in its own inmost nature, is very prone to do thus; yea as also the flesh which hangs about that which is spirit in truth, both which prejudice themselves very much there, and therefore should endeavour, watch and pray that they might avoyd it.

Only use not Liberty for an occasion, &c.

Ye may use all your Liberty, only do not abuse it. If it be in any kind an occasion or advantage to the flesh, ye abuse it. If ye manage it so as to satisfie any desire, any delight of the flesh, this is not true Liberty rightly made use of, but the Liberty of the Gospel injured.

The Liberty of the Gospel, it sets free the spirit, but it is a yoke of bondage to the flesh, it binds up the man wonderful-strait in all his nature and motions, letting him not one whit further loose, then he is new made in this new life.

That Liberty therefore which feeds and satisfies the flesh, which gives scope to the carnal spirit of man, is not the truth. And if there be any light which the spirit of man hath by the Revelation of the Gospel, whereby he apprehendeth and practiseth such liberty, he understandeth not that light, he abuseth that light.

More particularly, There are three main ways of abusing

abusing this liberty, or the flesh is very apt to take occasion by this liberty to corrupt it self and prejudice the life of its spirit, chiefly in these three respects: In reference to its *Temper*, in reference to its *Rest*, in reference to its *Motions*. What the spirit slays by true spiritual Liberty, the flesh getting into the outside of it quickens: and what the spirit thereby quickeneth, the flesh thereby slayeth.

1. The flesh is apt to take occasion by Gospel-Liberty, to corrupt it self in its Temper, to begin to lift up it self as if it were something. The flesh, when its own nakedness is discovered to it, and when it is cast into grievous bonds, feeling the fetters and shakles of sin, death and misery about it, it is mightily ashamed: but when it feels these fallen off, and in stead thereof it finds it self clothed with the life and liberty of the spirit, it begins to prick up its ears again, and look upon it self as some-body. O how low were *the people of the Jews*, both in the eye of the world and in their own thoughts, before the Lord clothed and adorned them: but afterwards, how loftily did they look upon the rest of the world and scorn them even as dogs? Neither were *the converted Gentiles* altogether free from this snare, but they were apt likewise to boast not only over the rest of the world, but over the *Jews* also, *Rom.* 11.

2. The flesh will also take advantage hereby to corrupt it self in its Rest. There is *a rest for the people of God*, a rest from all the toilsome motions of the humane spirit: which the flesh will lay hold on to neglect what it should do, and the doing whereof doth not contradict or interrupt this rest, but floweth from it. The flesh by this liberty will be apt to think it is become its own, and may neglect any duties or ordinances (duties of love and service, ordinances of worship, &c.) as it shall think good: whereas the flesh hath no more liberty in this respect, then as it is drenched into and truly led by the spirit. The spirit of the

the Lord is free; and ſo far as our ſpirit, yea and as our fleſh alſo, is taken into the ſpirit of the Lord, it partaketh of this freedom. But the fleſh, which is in part thus advanced, muſt know its place and diſtance; It muſt know as well how to deſcend, ſtand and walk in its preſent place, relation and order, as to aſcend and maintain fellowſhip with the Lord. But this the fleſh, till it be throughly mortified, cannot learn to do, but will be continually ſeeking its own honour and eaſe, and abuſing all the light, life and liberty of the ſpirit: therefore the Lord hath great reaſon to keep the fleſh very ſhort, even in his choiceſt ones.

3. The fleſh will alſo think it hath liberty to do what it pleaſeth, and ſo will make uſe of this liberty to glut it ſelf with all manner of vanity and ſenſuality. The fleſh which naturally longeth to take its fill of the delights of the fleſh, doth as naturally incline to take all advantages, and will not ſtick to bend aſide the very light, life, and liberty of the ſpirit thereunto. O what draughts of vanity will it now ſwill down, when once it feels it ſelf fenced from the fear of that danger which was its only curb. Now will every fleſhly ſpirit take its ſwindg, according to its temper and inclination, ſome in more groſs and ſenſual, ſome in more refined and ſpiritual pollutions.

Thus that wherein the breath, life and ſpirit of the Goſpel lieth (An holy Temper, an holy Reſt, and holy Motions) the fleſh getteth into and corrupteth, and thereby eateth out all the excellency and vigor of life which was let out in the diſpenſation, deſtroyeth that precious ſavour and leaven which it had from the life, conceiveth with ſome new ſeed of ſpiritual filthineſs, and at laſt bringeth forth a more unclean filthy birth of the fleſh, then its womb was capable of before.

But by love ſerve one another.

Man would have liberty to reign, He would have eve-

ry thing ſerve him: He maketh uſe of his Light, his Life, his Liberty to ſerve himſelf; and to make every thing elſe ſerve him. But the life in Chriſt and his ſeed, which floweth from the Love of the Father and dwelleth in love, delighteth to ſerve. It will be ſerviceable to every thing, but eſpecially to that nature which is the ſame with it ſelf. This nature teacheth it not only ſelf-love, which every nature teacheth, but alſo to love its neighbor here, as it ſelf.

Chriſt though he was a *King* and had a *Kingdom*, yet he came not here to reign, but to ſerve: And all his ſeed who partake of the ſame life, follow him (who is their guide) in the ſame ſteps. As they have the ſame nature of love with him; ſo the ſame nature guideth them to the ſame ſervice of love.

The love that is in Chriſt, and the love that is in the Saints, maketh their humane ſpirit, with all the life, liberties and enjoyment of it, which it either hath in it ſelf or receiveth by the Goſpel, to ſerve both the life of their own ſpirits and the life in one another, and that under all the weakneſſes in which it is ſown or can grow up. It is more pleaſant and natural to Chriſt and his ſeed, to deny their Liberty and enter into bonds for the advantage of others, then to enjoy it for their own ſatisfaction. The Liberty of their natures, the Liberty of their ſpirits they cannot loſe, and as for the Liberty of any outward practiſe, it is not of ſo much value as to be maintained to anothers prejudice. Liberty can exerciſe and enjoy it ſelf as much in the forbearance, as in the uſe: nay it is direct bondage not to be able to wave it in ſuch a caſe. He is a ſlave, he is in bonds, he hath not a large and free ſpirit, who can only reign, but cannot ſerve; who cannot deny himſelf with the ſame eaſe and content wherewith he obſerveth himſelf. He is bound up in his Nature, he is reſtrained in his Liberty; He is free but

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in part, he hath not arrived at the compleat temper of the life, for the life can do both, and hath a time and ſeaſon for both.

XI. *Of the low Ebb, which the Lord Chriſt was brought to, by his Death and Sufferings.*

PSAL. 22. 6.

But I am a worm, and no man; a reproach of men, and deſpiſed of the people.

THis is the ſtate and condition of *Chriſt* in the time of his Death. This is his dying ſence, or his ſence when he is dying, of his own ſtate and poſture therein. In the midſt of his life, while the Power of God reſted in him and the Glory of God ſhone upon him, he was a God and no man: He was one with the Father; one in ſubſtance, one in life, one in motion, operation and enjoyment. But now in the ſeaſon of his Death, in the time of his deſertion and affliction (while that life fails and gives up the ghoſt, for want of the preſence and influence of God, and by the power and force of the enemy) as he was before lifted up far above the ſtate of man, ſo now he falls far beneath it, *I am a worm and no man.* That excellency which is in man, (that excellency which may yet be found in man even in his broken ſtate,) Chriſt is ſtripped of when his own life dies, ſo that in truth he is not a man, not ſo much as a man. This is not an hyperbolical or paſſionate expreſſion, but the expreſſion of a true ſenſe from a true underſtanding. Which will appear more cleerly, if we conſider theſe things which are moſt eminent in man, as *his Beauty, his Majeſty, his Wiſdom, his Strength, his Intercourſe with God*; all which Chriſt was ſtripped of in the time of his Death, in all which reſpects he was more like to a worm then a man.

1. For the *Beauty* of man. *Man* is evidently the moſt

lovely, the moſt comely piece, of the whole Creation. He is as it were the *extract*, the *quinteſcence* of the Creation exactly formed. As *Chriſt* is exactly formed to be the beloved of God: ſo *Man* is exactly formed to be the beloved of Chriſt. And as the Godhead pleaſeth it ſelf in the beauty and lovelineſs of Chriſt: ſo Chriſt (and in him the Godhead) pleaſeth himſelf in the lovelineſs of man. God ſaith to Chriſt and Chriſt ſaith to man, *Thou art all fair my love, there is no ſpot in thee.* Long before this world was both the delight of God and of Chriſt was in and about man: *Before the mountains were ſettled*, &c. *While as yet he had not made the Earth nor the fields*, &c. *Then was* I *by him: Rejoycing in the habitable parts of his Earth, and my delights were with the ſons of men. Prov.*8. 25, 26. & 30, 31.

2. There is a *Majeſty* in man. God who appointed man to be his Vicegerent, ſet a ſtamp of his own Majeſty upon him. And this is yet to be ſeen in man, there are the reliques of it yet in his nature, and a ſenſe thereof in the nature of the Creatures. There is a ſtamp of ſubjection upon all the creatures, and a ſtamp of dominion and Majeſty in man.

3. There is *Wiſdom* in man, Man is as it were the head of the wiſdom of the Creation. Man hath a light in him beyond the Creature, whereby he can comprehend it, mannage it and make it to ſerve him. He hath a great root and principle of wiſdom in him, whereby he knoweth both God, himſelf and the creature, and can effect ſtrange things. He can foreſee and provide for good and againſt evil: He can ſearch out what he wants, yea and make uſe of what he finds. Look upon the wiſdom which man yet hath, and ye ſhall find, that he is as it were a God and liveth like a God, in compare with the reſt of the Creation.

4. Man hath *Strength* too, Strength ſutable to his eſtate.

eſtate. Take him with that addition which his wiſdom adds to his ſtrength, and he can doe great things. Take him with his engines and he is ſtronger then any other part of the Creation, nay then all the reſt of the Creation put together. What can he not do? what can he not ſuffer? *The Spirit of a man will beare his infirmities.* All the infirmities which ordinarily befall man, nay all the infirmities proper to man, there is ſtrength in the ſpirit of man to graple with. Indeed when God doth break man, when God doth wound him, then he groweth weak: but otherwiſe man hath a great deal of ſtrength yet remaining. *The Egyptians are men and not God, and their Horſes fleſh and not ſpirit; when the Lord ſhall ſtretch out his hand, both he that helpeth ſhall fall, and he that is holpen ſhall fall down, and they all ſhall fail together.* O what a weak thing is man in the midſt of all his ſtrength, when God comes to deal with him! But ſet God aſide, and who knoweth his ſtrength? What buildings would man raiſe, what defences would he make for himſelf, what would he be, what would he do, what would he ſuffer, did not the Lord provide a worm to gnaw at the Root of his ſpirit?

5. Man hath a kind of *intercourſe with God.* He is yet neerer to God, and hath yet more converſe with him, then the reſidue of the Creation. His relation is of it ſelf cloſer, and his Communion more intimate. God ſpeaketh more directly to him, provideth more directly for him (Gods voice to and care over things is in a great degree in reference to him and for his ſake:) And he knoweth God, loveth God, truſteth in God, calleth upon God, in another way and after another manner, then the reſt of the Creatures can. There is yet a touch left, there yet remains a wilde portraict of the glorious work of God upon man. This is, in part, a taſte of the excellency of man; this is his nature, this is his life, this is his eſtate ſtill in ſome degree, though fallen exceedingly ſhort of

its own glory, truth and fulneſs.

But now, *The life of Chriſt* is far beyond the life of man. He exceeds man, further then man doth the creatures.

The *Beauty of Chriſt* wonderfully exceeds the beauty of man. Chriſts beauty is of a deeper, a purer, a more inward nature: The very rayes and luſtre of the inward ſpirit of the divinity dwell in him, and ſhine from his face. There is wonderful beauty in the nature, viſage, and in all the motions of the life and ſpirit of Chriſt: His faith, his love, his ſweetneſs, meekneſs, patience, &c. O how reſplendent! All that is beautifull in man, he hath in him after a much more lovely manner, and a peculiar beauty of his own beſides.

And ſo *his Majeſty* is alſo far greater. Man in all his Majeſty, cannot but admire at (and bow before) the Majeſty of Chriſt in his perſon, words and geſtures. He appeared like one of another region, He ſpake with another manner of ſpirit, and in ſuch a way as was ſutable to the Majeſty of his own ſpirit, *He taught as one having authority*. And though he was exceeding full of love and tenderneſs, yet his Majeſty kept his diſciples ſo in awe, that they durſt not ask him any queſtion but very humbly and with great fear and reverence.

The *Wiſdom* alſo of Chriſt did far tranſcend the wiſdom of Man. The root thereof was of a better kind, planted in better earth, deeper rooted, more carefully attended, and of a better growth. Chriſt was able (by the skill and vertue of his nature) to contrive ſpiritual deſigns, to manage ſpirituall affairs, to provide for ſpirituall good and againſt ſpirituall evil: yea far more skilfull was he in his ſpiritual eſtate then man in his naturall. A very wiſe and underſtanding ſhepheard, able to walk himſelf and guide all his ſheep through all danger, diſtractions, oppoſitions, intricacies and deaths into the full truth and ſubſtance of life.

And

And the *Strength* of Chriſt is great too. What cannot Chriſt do? what cannot Chriſt ſuffer? The Life of Chriſt can better dye its death, then man can his. It can goe through weakneſs better. It can endure to be far more weak, and in that weakneſs dye a far more bitter death. It can run through all conditions, all duties, all afflictions, all diſpenſations with eaſe and delight, *I know how to want*, ſaith *Paul*, *and how to abound*, yea *I can do all things through Chriſt ſtrengthening me.* And in another place he inſtanceth in the worſt and hardeſt things, expreſſing at what an height he felt his life able to maintain it ſelf in the very midſt of them: *Therefore I take pleaſure in infirmities, in reproaches, in neceſsities, in perſecutions, in diſtreſſes for Chriſts ſake: for when I am weak, then am I ſtrong.* 2 *Cor.* 12. 10.

Laſtly, Chriſts *intercourſe with God*, how ſweet, how full is it! He is ever converſing with God, God is ever converſing with him. He eyeth God in every thing: in all ſpiritual motions, in all natural motions. In ſpiritual motions he hath to do with nothing but him; in natural motions he hath to do with him chiefly. He is the chief thing which God eyeth, and God is the chief thing which he eyeth in every thing. *I have ſet the Lord always before me: becauſe he is at my right hand, I ſhall not be moved*, *Pſal.* 16. 8. Mark, There is a mutual conjunction, a natural union between God and Chriſt (for this poſture of each here floweth from it and pointeth at it) they place themſelves by one another, they mind one another, they ſtand by and to one another. Chriſt ſetteth God before him, and God placeth himſelf by Chriſt, ſtandeth at his right hand, and this is their mutual content, delight and ſafety. They are well, ſecure, and perfectly at hearts-eaſe while they are together. All miſery from the begining to the end, ariſeth from their ſeparation and diſtance, and will ſoon vaniſh when the whole courſe

courſe of that is perfectly over.

Thus Chriſt is in his life: But now in the death of Chriſt it is far otherwiſe. Chriſt in his death falls not only beneath this Glory, but alſo beneath the glory of man. God when he breaketh Chriſt, breaketh him more terribly then he hath yet broken man; leaveth not ſo much excellency in him, as he hath yet left in man; but he beholdeth himſelf (and who ever can look upon him ſhall find him) more in the condition of a worm then a man.

There is no more beauty in him, then in a worm: no more majeſty in him, then in a worm: no more wiſdom or ſtrength in him, then in a worm. He hath loſt all his light and all his ſtrength in the things of God. He knoweth not how to beleeve, hope, pray or do any thing which requireth life and aſſiſtance from God: and yet his nature cannot but do theſe things in a very vehement manner, though not after the ſame rate of underſtanding and life which he poſſeſſed before, nor with the aid of ſo powerful an influence. But in what ever he is or does, or what ever befals him, God regards him not, God takes no more notice of him then of a worm. Chriſt who ſerved God with the ſtrength of his life all the days of his life, what a ſtranger is God unto him in the time of his death. Call he may again and again in his extremity for relief, for ſupport, for ſomewhat to ſtay his fainting ſpirit; but no news, no return, no regard from God, no more then the worm has that crauls upon the ground: *My God, my God, why haſt thou forſaken me? why ſo far from helping me, and from the words of my roaring? O my God, I cry in the day time, but thou heareſt not, and in the night, and there is no ſilence to me, Pſal.* 22. 1, 2. *I am a worm and no man.*

A reproach of men. That is ſomewhat more. Man is pitied by man in his broken eſtate, but Chriſt is reproached.

proacned. To have been high and then to fall low, is a matter of reproach, eſpecially where a further aſcent was ſpoken of and aſſerted. Chriſt and the people of God talk of neerneſs to God, and further advancement by God, yea of perfection in God: therefore when they are thus forſaken (as they are really and perfectly forſaken in that fleſhly diſpenſation, wherein they are at firſt brought forth, and for a ſeaſon aſſiſted and owned) and their life broken and ſlain, they become a grievous reproach. Man cannot forbear upbraiding Chriſt, when he beholdeth him dying. When man feels his own life, which Chriſt ſo diſdained and ſtill teſtified againſt, I ſay, when man feels this ſo far above the Life of Chriſt, (as it appears to be and indeed is when Chriſt is dying) he cannot but reproach Chriſt. Chriſt is ſuch a proper object of ſcorn to the ſpirit of man, in the time of his death, as cannot but draw forth ſcorn from him. For man to ſee and feel himſelf alive and free from that death wherewith he was threatened, and the death to fall upon Chriſt who threatened it, even ſuch a death as concludes his death for ever to mans eye, and ſecures man from all that danger which might accrue to him from the Power of Chriſts Life, and which man might ſtand in ſome feare of, this cannot but ſtir in man the ſpirit of deriſion, and cauſe him in his very heart to reproach Chriſt. *A reproach of men.*

And deſpiſed of the people. Chriſt in his death is not only a reproach to man, but to the very people of God alſo. The fleſhly people of God cannot but then deſpiſe this life. As they cannot but in ſome degree honour it, when they ſee the ſweet and powerful ſhining forth of it: (*Never man ſpake like this man. He hath done all things well, &c.*) So they cannot but deſpiſe it, when they ſee it declining. Such is the temper of fleſhly *Iſrael*, and ſuch the way of Chriſts appearing, that the truth and glory of

his life is more hidden from them then from the world, and their deſpite of him in his death is greater. O how they pleaſe themſelves in their fleſhly zeal and devotion, when they find the ſpirit and life of Chriſt dying in and paſſing through his fleſh.

All they that ſee me, laugh me to ſcorn.

There is nothing feels greater contempt, nor more univerſal, then Chriſt in his death. The eye of man univerſally contemneth him, yea the whole heart of man laughs at him with the greateſt deriſion and diſdain that can be. High, low, rich, poor, Jew, Gentile, and every ſort and ſect among each, loath Chriſt in this ſtate, He is now become *the abhoring of all fleſh.* They jeer at him, they trample upon him with the greateſt laughter and ſcorn, and without the leaſt regret. They *ſpit in his face*, they *buffet* him, *they ſhoot out the lip, they ſhake the head*, He is a worm and no man with them too.

He truſted on the Lord, that he would deliver him.

This is one expreſſion of the great contumely in their ſpirits. This is the man that truſted on God for deliverance. This is that great and glorious life which came from God, which ſo depended upon God, which was ſo ſure to be ſecured by God. The wiſdom of man ſhould fall, the ſtrength of man ſhould fall, but he ſhould be preſerved and delivered by God. He would not walk in the way of man, nor he ſhould not come to the end of man. God loatheth man, in the midſt of all his wiſdom, righteouſneſs and excellency; but this is the beloved of God, the delight of God. Behold now what he is! Behold now where he is! Now let God ariſe and ſave his choyce one, his beloved one! *He truſted on the Lord, that he would deliver him: let him deliver him, if he delight in him.*

O fooliſh man! *Ought not Chriſt to ſuffer theſe things, and ſo to enter into his Glory?* If Chriſt will reap the great Glory

Glory and riches of the increaſe of his life, ought he not to reduce it into a ſeed, and to ſow that ſeed in a womb of death ſutable to the nature of it? O vain man, never waſt thou more deceived! Thou ſeemeſt to have the foundations of thy life ſecured, while Chriſt is dying; but diſcerneſt not how the foundations of thy death, and of his Life and Glory, are hereby laid.

Uſe. Obſerve the difference between Chriſt and the people of God in the time of their life, and in the time of their death. Chriſt dyed, and the People of God muſt dye too. They that have life from Chriſt, muſt dye with Chriſt. As Chriſt laid down that life, which he received from the Father, in his fleſh: ſo muſt the People of God alſo lay down or ſacrifice that life which they receive from Chriſt. Every *Diſciple* of Chriſts muſt taſte of *his cup*, drink of *his baptiſm*. They that have lived with him, and taſted the ſtrength and glory of his life, muſt alſo drink of the bitterneſs of his death: for that is their way to enter into glory, as well as his. The ſame life in them, as it tends to the ſame end, ſo it requires the ſame paſſage. And how lovely ſoever they were in their life, how great ſoever the majeſty, wiſdom and ſtrength of their life, how ſweet and familiar ſoever their converſe with God, *&c.* yet all theſe will run low enough in the time of their death. They will be weak enough, and fooliſh enough, and blind enough, not being able either *to chuſe the good or refuſe the evil.* O how glorious is a Chriſtian in the time of his life! how he flouriſheth with leaves and with fruits of ſeveral kinds! But he is bare enough of all in his death: Then he can be nothing, then he can appear nothing; Then he can do nothing; Then he can bear nothing; He knoweth not how to ſubſiſt, nor which way to turn him. But of this more under the next Head.

XII. *Of the low Estate, which the Seed of Christ are reduced unto, by their Death and Sufferings.*

PROV. 30. 2.

Surely I am more brutish then any man, and have not the understanding of a man.

THis is the voyce of them, in whom the life of God is sown in their broken state. When that life springeth up growing and flourishing in them, then they are exalted far beyond man; then they have a deeper understanding, and fuller enjoyment then man is capable of: That life, that glory which then shineth in them, man cannot but vail unto. But according to their exaltation, is their humiliation; for when that life is shattered, they fall far beneath man: They have not that *wisdom*, that *strength*, that *righteousness*, that *excellency* which is in man. *Surely, I more brutish then man, and have not the understanding of man.*

Man is very brutish, man is very shallow. He is brutish in his desires and affections, shallow in his comprehension. Very little *knowledg*, very little *understanding* hath man; so little it is, that it can hardly distinguish him from the brutes; yea he is so brutish (or rather worse) that he doth not follow the guidance of that little he hath. *Man, that excellent Image of the Almighty, is become like the perishing beasts:* His *knowledg*, his *affections*, his *motions*, his *course*, his *end*, are just like theirs, as is observed by the wise Searcher into the nature of things, *Eccles.* 3. 18, 19. Man is not at all like God or like himself, he hath not a quick understanding or sense in the ways or things of God, but in his springing up, growth, progress, and behavior in the world, as also in his passage again out of the world, is just like a brute.

But *the child, the heir* in his broken state, falls beneath this

this brutiſh ſtate of man. Man falls below the creature, (man loſeth that ſenſe and knowledg in his kind, which the very creatures retain in their kind: *The Ox knoweth his Owner, and the Aſs his Maſters crib, &c.*) and the life in the ſeed falls below man. Great is the death of the common creature; Greater is the death of man; but O how deep, how deadly is the *death* of the ſeed! How deep in their *grave!* How low do they ſink into the bowels of the *great Abyſs!*

All things which the Lord hath as yet brought forth, he cauſeth to paſs through the jaws of death: And their death is proportionable to the condition and degree of their life. None taſted of ſuch a life as *Chriſt*; None alſo of ſuch a death, ſave his *ſeed*, who drink of his Cup, and are baptized with his Baptiſm.

O how low was Chriſt brought in his broken ſtate, when he was forſaken of his God! He was not inapprehenſive himſelf of it (what ever we now judg it) when he cryed out, *I am a worm and no man.* I am not a man, I have not the knowledg of a man, the life of a man, the excellency of a man, the defence of a man: I can find nothing fit to compare my meanneſs and miſery unto, but the moſt contemptible of the creatures, a worm, which hath no underſtanding, no excellency, no ability, no manner of lovelineſs in it.

Now *the ſervant is no better then his Maſter*; The *members* have the ſame nature, courſe and condition with the *head.* The *life* in them muſt be broken, They muſt be brought low, They muſt alſo be ſtripped of God: and then the veſſel which was exalted hereby, will feel pain, ſhame and miſery. Then they will become more brutiſh then man, and want that common underſtanding of man, the greateſt tincture and excellency whereof they now ſo much deſpiſe. Well may they now flouriſh and be brisk over man; but ſeaſons of death will overtake them, and

then their ſpirits will be flat and low enough.

This *condition* of theirs is made up of theſe three things, A throughly broken ſtate in it ſelf, A through ſenſe of it in themſelves, and a through ſight and contempt of it by the world.

1. *A throughly broken ſtate in it ſelf.* As the life and nature of Chriſt and his ſeed is true and through: ſo is alſo their breaking. There is a double breaking of them: A breaking of the *liquor*, and a breaking of the *veſſel*. There is a breaking of the ſeed or inward life, or of the heavenly part; and there is a breaking of the outward nature, or earthly part wherein it was ſown, and which was transformed and made happy by it. There is nothing of the new life, no nor yet any thing of the old nature left whole, when this death is perfected. This quick ſpirit, This quickened nature, each are become nothing in themſelves, but only (like a lump of dead clay) fit to be made any thing, by any thing which hath skill and vertue to form. This poor Land, which was once the pleaſant habitation of God, is made empty, deſolate and ruined. This is the true ſtate of Chriſt and his ſeed in their death. And though man ſeem to himſelf both to deſire and in ſome meaſure to attain this condition, yet he is as far off from the true nature of either, as he is from the true knowledg of himſelf.

Man would fain be broken. There is an apprehenſion upon him, that the way to life is through death, (for this which he poſſeſſeth, he may ſee, he may feel, and ſo may eaſily be convinced that it is not life,) and therefore he cannot but long and earneſtly deſire to paſs through it, that ſo he may come at life. But this *Baptiſm* none can baptize himſelf with; He alone can do it, who baptized Chriſt. It is the Life alone which is capable of this breaking, (for the outward veſſel belonging to the ſeed, or in which the ſeed is ſown, hath its capacity in and from the Life,)

Life,) and he alone can break it, who formed it. The Lord alone can build, and the Lord alone can deſtroy this kind of fabrick. This wiſe and accurate deſtruction requireth the ſame skill and vertue, which iſſued out and built up the nature and Life of Chriſt and his ſeed. The *Prince of darkneſs* can never attain ſo much as to adminiſter any degree of this death, further then he is inabled, inſtructed and aſſiſted thereunto from the root of all things: (whoſe wiſdom, skill and power goeth along perfectly in every thing, though it be not comprehended in or apprehended by any thing.) Now as all death and brokenneſs hath affliction and miſery in it, ſo this beyond all: And as man will aſpire after this death, ſo he will fancy that he hath this kind of miſery upon him; but yet in the midſt of all his pangs, he knoweth not what belongs to it.

There are three great *ſcenes* in the death of Chriſt (in each of which there are many various ſtrains, ſteps, and degrees) all which man can imitate very accurately, but cannot reach to the truth of any of them.

1. There is *the death of corruption.* The life and ſpirit of Chriſt cometh forth with power againſt the corruption of mans nature, and with the ſword of God ſlayeth it: in ſo much as he, in whom the life of Chriſt is truly ſown and ſpringeth up, ſhall find himſelf dying unto his ſinfull nature dayly. This is one ſcene.

2. There is *the death of the excellency of mans nature.* Sin muſt dye and righteouſneſs muſt live, yea and then righteouſeneſs muſt dye alſo. When the life of Chriſt at firſt breaks forth in man, O, ſays he, that this filthy nature might be deſtroyed, and that I might be brought forth in holineſs and righteouſneſs! but little doth he then think, that all this holineſs and righteouſneſs muſt come to judgment and dye alſo. The Spirit of the Lord can judge and find fault with the very nature and life

life of the Image of God, not as it is now corrupted, but as it was at firſt planted in the firſt *Adam*. The ſame God which findeth fault with the firſt Covenant, can alſo find fault with the firſt creature, as it was brought forth under that covenant, and can ſo judge it unto death and deſtruction.

3. There is *the death of the Son*; even of all the excellency of his life and nature, as it was brought forth in the fleſh. *Eternal life*, in the life thus received, dyeth. *Chriſt*, thus alive, dyeth even to the nature of this his life, and to the ſpirit from whom he received it. *The Spirit*, who gave him this life, and who kept this life pure in him, he ſlayeth it: yea Chriſt himſelf offereth up this life, *without ſpot to God, through the eternal Spirit*. Theſe are the three parts or ſtages of death, which God mentioned at the beginning upon mans fall, namely, The death of the *Serpent*, the death of *man*, and the death of *the Son*.

Now there are counterfeits of all theſe. Many ſeem to be dead to their corruptions, who are not: and many ſeem to be dead to the excellency of nature, when it is but by the skill, life and excellency of nature that they attain this ſeeming death: Many alſo ſeem to drink very deep into the death of the Son, who never yet taſted of that life of his which is to dye. This is the firſt thing whereof this condition conſiſts, *viz.* A throughly broken ſtate in it ſelf.

2. To this there is added in the ſecond place, *a through ſenſe of it in themſelves*. They are not only broken, but they feel themſelves broken: They are not only ſtripped and left naked, but they feel both their ſtripping and nakedneſs. In other caſes a man may be *poor and miſerable*, yea *blind and naked*, and yet take himſelf to be *rich and happy*, &c. but it is not ſo here. This kind of breaking is lively and of quick ſenſe in the ſpirits of them that

that are broken. This is ſuch a death as he throughly feels, who dyes. *Chriſt* felt himſelf to be a *worm*, and the *ſeed* of Chriſt feel their brutiſhneſs and want of underſtanding. *Adam* was caſt into a deep ſleep, while *Eve* was formed out of him: but *Chriſt* is awake, and by the quickneſs of his awakened ſpirit forms his *Church*, and the vigor of that life in his Church ſuffers in its death.

3. There is alſo *a through ſight and contempt of it by the world*, and of them becauſe of it. God carries on the death of Chriſt and his ſeed openly in the eye of the world. As God kindleth and ſetteth up this *lamp* in the view of the world, ſo he putteth it out alſo in their view. The ſymptomes of this death, the ſymptomes of this breaking, are ſo viſible and manifeſt, that it cannot be hid. That life, that power, that activity, that ſtirring of God in their ſpirits, words, behavior, whole courſe, &c. is put out and gone. They as manifeſtly appear (all this ſeaſon) in the world without it, as formerly they did with it.

And the world now deſpiſeth them. That, which gained eſteem and glory from the world, being gone, they cannot but deſpiſe them; and ſo much the more, by how much they began to honour them. There is ſuch a luſtre and glory in the life of Chriſt, when at any time it diſcovers it ſelf within mans center, as man cannot but acknowledg and ſubject himſelf with all his life and excellency before: but when man ſees all this fallen and himſelf ſtill ſtanding where he was; This which made ſuch an appearance above him, being fallen beneath him, Chriſt being dead and he alive; how can he now but deſpiſe this appearance of the life and luſtre of Chriſt, and ſo much the more becauſe of its former glory? The exceeding low fall of the higheſt glory, is moſt contemptible. Never man ſpake as Chriſt ſpake, and never man did as Chriſt did, even to the eye and in the ſenſe of

the world; *He hath done all things well, &c.* What Power and Authority did he bear in the very ſpirits and conſciences of his greateſt adverſaries? How did he every where ſo take with the people, that his malicious and unjuſt enemies durſt never meddle with him? But in his death, in his broken ſtate, he loſt all. He was not only *a worm and no man* (when he was forſaken of his God) in the truth of his eſtate and condition, but he alſo felt it: and he did not only feel it himſelf, but his enemies ſaw it too, yea it was palpable to the common eye of the people, and to all that beheld him; *All that ſee me laugh me to ſcorn, they ſhoot the lip, they ſhake the head, ſaying, He truſted in God that he would deliver him, &c.* Is this the man that had ſo much intereſt in God? Is this the man in whom the Power of God did ſo appear, and who could do ſuch mighty things by the Power and Vertue of God? Is his Doctrine and Miracles, his great Union and Communion come to this? They ſhake their heads (as at a deceit, as at a deluſion, as at a piece of vanity) they mock, they ſpit upon him, they buffet him, &c. They crown him in deriſion. They reproach, yea they abhor in their ſpirits, the very power of his life, in the day of his death.

Uſe. Behold, O Chriſtians, the *death* of the life of Chriſt! behold the *Baptiſm* of Chriſt, the miſerable *paſſage* to the Crown. If ye will become Chriſts, ye muſt dye not only to the corruption and ſhame, but alſo to all the glory and excellency of this world, and yet not ſtop there neither. The life of Chriſt will put out the life of all other things; and when it hath done ſo, there is a death for it too. The Spirit of Chriſt in the ſeed, muſt paſs through its own blood into the holy of holies.

Alas, Sirs! If there were nothing to paſs through, but a death to this world, what an eaſie matter were it (comparatively) to be a Chriſtian? What an eaſie matter were it, to deſpiſe and trample upon this world, by vertue of

of ſuch an excellent life in the Spirit? To have that ſpirit in the ſeed broken, which delights or may delight in the world, it is bitter indeed to man, but alas that bitterneſs is nothing, in compare with that bitterneſs which ariſeth from the breaking of the new life in the new ſpirit. Would ye know what this is? Why meaſure it by this: by the ſweetneſs of this life. Do ye know how ſweet it is to taſte the true nature of the Life of God! to enjoy and live upon the breath of his Spirit! to walk in the light and love of the Lord! If ye truly know theſe things (the true ſweetneſs of them) then ye may be able to give a gueſs at what it is to have them broken.

But as there have been counterfeit Images all along of the Life of Chriſt, ſo are there alſo of his Death. O what pains do ſeveral ſorts of men take to find out this Death, yea and to meet with the anguiſh of it! but all to no purpoſe: for the Lord alone can light, and the Lord alone can extinguiſh this Lamp. *I kill and I make alive,* This holdeth true every where, but here moſt eſpecially. The Lord alone can bring forth the next ſtrain of life, and the Lord alone can bring into this narrow paſſage of death.

XIII. *The Courſe and End of Man.*

Deut. 31. 29.

For I know that after my death ye will utterly corrupt your ſelves, and turn aſide from the way which I have commanded you: and evil will befall you in the latter days, becauſe ye will do evil in the ſight of the Lord, to provoke him to anger through the works of your hands.

THis people (who were the choyce of God, among whom the ſeed of life was ſown) was a type of the ſpirit of man, truly repreſenting his nature and ſtate, more eſpecially in theſe five particulars following.

1. In his difficulty to be woond up to the mind and will of God in any dispensation. There was a great deal of work with this people to bring them to any pass; Continual Instructions, continual Corrections, a mighty current of Power and Providence did God both put forth and maintain, to cause them to beleeve and obey, both in *Egypt* and in the *Wilderness*: and yet it proved a very difficult task to winde them up to either.

Thus it is with the spirit of man. God is at a very great expence to bring him to any thing. He is fain to let forth of his own Spirit, of his own Light, of his own Power, and batter him out of all his fleshly holds, before he can bring him to submit to him and walk with him in any of his dispensations.

2. In his sudden backsliding. This people did naturally fall from God: They were hardly drawn up, but did slide down of themselves. What a work had God with them to make them beleeve and wait upon him? what a many wonderful Works did he shew, to draw them up to trust him, to follow him, to love him? &c. but alas, how soon did they forget his Works, and retire back into the fleshly principle and course of the *Heathen*, and this both in *Egypt* and in the *Wilderness*, and also in *Canaan*!

Thus it is also with the spirit of man. Let God never so powerfully convince and engage him in the light and life of his spirit, yet he naturally slinks back from it. He corrupts himself in every dispensation of the Lord, seting up his own lusts there, serving them, and forgetting the Lord his *Maker* and *Redeemer*. He makes every path and truth, either of the *Law* or *Gospel*, serve his own carnal spirit: in so much as though he walk in all the ways of the Lord (as he accounts them,) yet he serves himself in all, and not the Lord in any. Mans flesh, mans reason (nay mans vanity and corruption) gets into every way of the

the Lord, polluting it self there, and prophaning all the holy things of God. It turns out of that which is indeed the way, and walks in that which, though it still calls it the way, yet is not, but only a way of its own, (for the very Ordinances and Institutions of God, after the spirit of man hath entered into them, and molded them to his own bent, God will no longer own them, but terms them his ways and inventions.)

3. In the season of mans corrupting himself, which is after *Moses* his death, after the death of *the Witnesses*, after the departure or death of that life in him, which seized upon him, overcame him, and as it were forced him into the ways of God. When the light of God cometh down upon man, and overbeareth his spirit, he cannot but follow it: but when that light is gone, he returneth to himself again; He turneth from the life, from the purity of that into which he was led, retaining only so much as will serve the ease, quiet, content and satisfaction of his own corrupt spirit.

There are gales of the Spirit of God, which descend upon this earth, the spirit of man. Where these blow strongly, man is hugely changed: He hath as it were a new spirit in him, whereby he is (after a sort) naturally led to follow the Lord. But when the Lord withdraweth this breath, his life perisheth, and man returneth to his Earth, to his very corruption again, yea and taketh unto himself seven Devils worse then the former: For the higher that man is raised, by this breath from the Lord; the lower he falls, when this breath is withdrawn. It is the spirit of corrupt man, getting (or advanced by the Lord) into the purest ways and forms of Religion, which bringeth forth the filthiest abominations.

4. In the result of this corruption, *and evil will befall you in the latter days.* Sin most naturally brings forth death. Corruption or putrefaction is a degree of,

and a direct passage unto death.

And it will break forth and appear *in the latter days.* Man must have a time to corrupt, in which he is to be let alone: but in the latter days, when his end draws nigh, death hastens apace: his corruption then begins to open it self, and to discover the death which lay hid in it. Then that evil, which man hoped all this while to secure himself from, will begin to manifest it self to be in the nature of his own spirit, or in the nature of that sin and corruption, which he hid within the nature of his spirit. He hath hid his destruction in his own bowels, he hath hugged it in his bosom, in the midst of all his designs to escape it: and in the latter days when it is grown ripe and strong, thence it will start, seize upon him and devour him. When the Lord hath throughly tryed the spirit of man, and when man hath throughly corrupted himself; then will he lay the ax to the root of this tree and cut it down, that it may cumber the ground no longer. He hath cut down the *Jews* already; Their latter days, wherein evil did befall them, have overtaken them: and he will also cut down the *Gentiles*. The *Jews* were not *the seed*, for *after the death of Moses* they did corrupt themselves, and discover, that they (like the rest of the world) were but flesh. Neither are the *Gentiles* the *seed*, for they also after the death of that life, which did flow from the Spirit into Christ and his Apostles, did also corrupt themselves. The uncircumcised and unclean spirit of man, did enter into this *Temple* and *Worship*, as well as into the former: Therefore the Lord will both cut down the spirit of man, and will also down with all that into which the spirit of man can enter; and then will he bring forth his own Truth; his true *Temple*, his true *Worship*, his true *Worshippers*.

5. In the ground of this death and destruction to man, *because ye will do evil in the sight of the Lord, to provoke him*

to

to anger through the works of your hands. All the motions of man anger God: All the works of his hands are filthy and corrupt in themselves, and provocative to the eye of his nature and spirit. All mans *knowledg*, all his *life*, all his *ways of Worship*, *Faith and Obedience* in every kind, every thing that suits the eye and judgment of his spirit, and wherewith he thinks to please God, is lothsom to God: This lothsomness stirreth up in God his indignation, which causeth him (in the proper season thereof) to bring death upon man, and to bring him to Judgment, after which cometh the second death. Then it shall be known who have been led by the Lord, and who have truly followed him, (though the spirit of man now laughs at all, who walk not with him in his way of understanding:) Then shall all see and know who are righteous, and be forced to confess from their very hearts, saying, *Verily there is a reward for the righteous*, a competent reward, a full reward unto them, for all the sufferings and misery which have attended them, in their way and passage hither.

Blessed is he whom the Lord leadeth (by the proper cross attending every dispensation) through trouble and death into life! But excessively miserable is that man, whose fleshly spirit remaineth in any dispensation, or who passeth from dispensation to dispensation with his life unslain, therewith feeding upon the *Ordinances*, *duties*, *enjoyments*, or any other holy or spiritual things of God, and thereby fattening and fitting himself for death and destruction against *the great and terrible day of the Lord God Almighty*: according as the spirit of Christ in *David* speaketh, *Psal.*94. 12,13. (with a gloss whereupon I shall draw towards a conclusion.)

Blessed is the man whom thou chasteneſt, O Lord, and teacheſt him out of thy Law:
That thou mayſt give him reſt from the days of adverſity, until

until the pit be digged for the wicked.

There is a pit digging for the wicked, into which when it is finished, when it is every way made large and deep and piercing enough, the whole wicked spirit of man shall either fall or be cast, or partly fall and partly be cast into it.

Till this pit be digged it is a troublesome time to the seed, but a quiet time with man. The spirit of man is now at ease; He can serve, he can please, he can enjoy himself in his whole course both of nature and religion; yea and he can also secure himself from future danger, from danger at the last: He hath *made a covenant with death, and with Hell is he at agreement; When the overflowing scourge passeth, it shall not come near him.* It is for *unbeleevers*, for *sinners*, (for persons *who know not God, or obey not the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ*) to fear death and Hell or eternal destruction. But when this pit is digged, the Spirit of the Lord (with his light) will search out the spirit of man, under all his disguises, and what ever hath not the true breath of life in it, shall be cast into and dye in this pit.

There are persons also to whom God will give *rest from the days of adversity.* Those who have all along been persecuted by all sorts of enemies, and afflicted with all sorts of miseries, that spirit which hath been hunted, wounded, grieved, distressed all the day long, by the cruel spirit of man and Satan, shall be rescued from the jaws of each and be refreshed. Those who are leavened with the life of Gods most holy Spirit, who are so new-changed by it, that they have none of that life, none of that spirit left remaining in them, which the Lord cometh to destroy, the Lord will give them *rest.* When the Lord cometh forth to hunt, take and devour the spirit of man, those in whom that spirit is already dissolved, shall not be in fear or danger of his severity, but shall find the

abundance

abundance of *love*, *sweetness*, *peace* and *rest* administred to them by the same hand, which will then so eagerly and fiercely prosecute the spirit of man. Then they who have hitherto been at ease, shall be troubled; and they who have hitherto been troubled, shall have ease, *And to you who are troubled, rest with us, When the Lord Jesus shall be revealed*, &c. 2 *Thes.* 1.

The ways, whereby God leadeth his to this rest, are partly *Instructions*, and partly *Corrections*. He breatheth his Spirit into them, and by the power and vertue of his rod, beareth down and subjecteth their spirits. He burneth up their dross aforehand, that he may make them fit to be saved (and that it may be righteous for him to save them) in the day of the worlds destruction. He striketh them down, he layeth load upon them, he humbleth them exceedingly, until he hath fitly tempered them to hear, and then he teacheth them the Law of his Life. And thus he reneweth both his knocks and his beams of light, as their condition need and capacity requireth.

O happy, happy, thrice happy are they whom God leadeth, though through a wilderness and the dismal exercises thereof, into his land of rest. All that severity of Discipline, under which they are now nurtured and trained up, is nothing to that misery, which they shall then escape, or to that life and blessedness which they are hereby prepared for. I shall close thus,

They that trust in lying vanities, *vanity shall be their recompence*. Yea they that trust or hope in *God*, or in *Christ*, or in *God through Christ*; after the strength of their own apprehensions fastened upon or gathered from the *Scriptures*, and not according to the knowledg and power of *the truth as it is in Jesus*, shall find even these objects vanity to them, their faith and expectation upon them vanity also, and their end misery, when they sink

into death and destruction with the world, yea and that somewhat deeper then the world. But they who in truth are taught and led by the truth, to wait and hope under their bondage and misery for the truth (how extravagant or rediculous soever they may appear, to all the various eyes of the several sorts of Religious persons, from the strange exercises of God upon them) shall be owned by the truth.

The *root, nature*, yea and all the *motions* of the spirit of the creature (even in all the dispensations of God) is rejected: for, in the true state and nature of things, it is not that which the Lord can accept. It is dark in all its light, dead in all its life, a captive and a slave in all its liberty, an hater and a rebel in the midst of all its love and obedience: and therefore how can the Lord (who searching the spirit, cleerly knoweth and discerneth this in the spirit) but throw it aside, notwithstanding its glittering appearances of light and life from him, of precious faith and hope in him, and of sweet love and obedience towards him? But the *root, nature* and *motions* of the seed, under all its disguises (in the midst of all its darkness, death, bonds, captivity and estrangedness from God) is his delight, is his heir, (it is the heir of his nature and spirit) and therefore shall undoubtedly inherit the truth and glory of life in him.

He that hath ears to hear, let him hear the spirit, which testifieth the same thing now, as it hath done all along the *Scriptures*. O let him who desireth the truth of salvation, harken to the voice of the spirit of God in the *Scriptures*, and not give ear to such fictions as his own spirit doth most naturally form out of them.

XIV. *The*

XIV. *The happy End of the holy Nature and Course of the Seed of Life, which the Spirit of Life, through all the various dark paths of sin, death and misery, most faithfully guideth it unto: or, The sweet and happy End of the Righteous.*

PSAL. 37. vers. 37.

Mark the perfect man, and behold the upright: for the end of that man is peace.

THE *perfect* or *upright man*, is he who is of an entire stamp or nature, and who walketh entirely with God in every dispensation, from the Law of this nature.

The very nature of man is imperfect, He is *a transgressor from the womb*. Let him never so honestly and ingenuously dedicate himself to God and to righteousness, yet he cannot for his heart walk with him, or live righteously. But the other cannot but do so: And however he may slip from the weakness of his present estate, yet his nature still sets him right again.

Now there is no man more miserable in his present condition, then this man. The unrighteous, the unholy spirit of man can thrive in the world, or flourish in any form of Religion: but this man, not having the spirit of this world, cannot seek or enjoy it, nor deliver himself from the oppressions and sufferings which are multiplied upon him by it. Nay he is persecuted also and grievously afflicted by the powers of darkness, which will not spare him in this their hour. Yea his God estrangeth and hideth himself from him (he *hideth his face from the house of Jacob*) chastising him sorely continually. Because of that corruption which cleaveth unto him, and which his feet are still gathering, the holy God which loveth truth and purity, is ever and anon casting him into the fire. The Lord by his Spirit of Judgment and Burning, doth most

naturally ſearch, try and judg the ſpirits of his people, until he hath purified and perfected them. Alas, how ſad therefore muſt it needs be with them, in the midſt of all theſe!

The world may live and flouriſh, but they are ſtill withering and dying. The world may enjoy the freedom of its natural ſpirit (after a ſort:) but theirs is in bonds. The world may laugh and rejoyce, becauſe of the contents they find, and can reap and enjoy in the things of the world, and in their ſeveral forms and exerciſes of Religion: but theſe cannot but weep, and lament that they are left deſolate and have no Comforter. Theſe are the *ſick* ones, theſe are the *blind* ones, theſe are the *lame* ones, theſe are the *poor* ones, theſe are the *naked* ones, theſe are the *perſecuted* ones, theſe are the *oppreſſed* ones, whoſe miſery no eye can ſee, no heart conceive, no tongue expreſs. Any miſery that man meeteth with, the ſpirit of man may pity him in: but this is a kind of miſery which the ſpirit of man knoweth not; and theſe are the perſons whom he judgeth, and whom his heart is hardened againſt.

But mark *the end of this man.* Look upon all this diſtreſs, all this miſery, all this lamentably hard travel in its end. *For the end of that man is peace.* There is no knowing of any thing as it now appears under its vail, in this dark ſhadowy world: but if you would underſtand any thing aright, keep your eye fixed upon it and obſerve it to the end. In the end *fleſh*, when it is ſtripped of all its ſeeming glory, will appear what it is: and in the end ſpirit, when it is unclothed of all its deformed rags, will appear what it is. If you conſider the perfect man without the diſcerning of his end, he will appear the pooreſt, moſt miſerable, moſt contemptible thing that can be: but if your eye can truly follow him unto his end, you will have another gheſs ſight of him there, *for the end of that man is peace.*

The end of a man is that to which he tends, that toward which

which his nature and all his motions bend their course, that unto which he grows, that which all his exercises and varieties (in all the several dispensations through which God leadeth him) contribute to. Every thing hath its end. There is an end of every dispensation, and an end after every dispensation. There is an end of all troubles, an end of all motions, an end of all rest, an end of all peace which is known in this world. Now there are two great Ends, according to the two great Natures which are sown in this world, which are *Death* and *Life*, *Joy* and *Sorrow*, *Anguish* and *Ease*, *Heaven* and *Hell*.

Peace is that quietness of Nature, wherein it is and enjoys it self and what it desires. Trouble is the disturbance of Nature, Peace is its settlement. There is trouble, and there is peace now to be seen in the world, but they are but shadows: but the trouble, and the peace which is the substance of the thing, is to be discovered in the end: and then that peace which belongeth to the nature and life of the perfect man, shall be dispenced to him. All old things, all old trouble, all old peace shall pass away, and this new trouble and peace succeed and take hold of things, according to their nature, estate and degree. But what this Peace particularly is, none can apprehend, but he who knoweth the nature, the spirit and the trouble of the perfect man: yet if you desire an outward description of it, take it thus:

It is the perfect serenity and calmness, both of the liquor and of the vessel of Life, in the Land of Rest: Where whatsoever might annoy or disturb is removed, and which aboundeth with whatsoever may ease or refresh. There is a Peace, which passeth all understanding to conceive not only the extent, but the very nature of it, which is the end of the perfect man, or at which the perfect man shall arrive in his end. Here his inmost spirit, clothed with his natural soul, which is also encompassed with an

outward bodily garment, ſhall ſit down in their proper ſeat of perfect reſt. When the *holy houſe* or *habitation of God* is opened, into which *no unclean thing ſhall enter* (but be diſturbed by it, and ſuffer from it according to the nature and degree of its evil) then ſhall this holy Child of God be admitted and welcomed into its own place and portion of reſt and peace there.

Take notice alſo by the way, of one great advantage this perfect man hath in any preſent diſpenſation of God. The world is now very dark and barren; and if a little light ſhould break forth, it would mightily refreſh it. But alas man would be lifted up above himſelf, and diſtempered by it at preſent, and afterwards he would dye again and become more miſerable. But the perfect man would both enjoy it more truly, more fully, more ſubſtantially at preſent; and alſo not be in ſuch danger afterward: Becauſe it would not be his life, but his life would rather be Lord over it; and ſo his chief happineſs not depending upon it, his chief happineſs would not paſs away with it. Miſerable is that man, who is only differenced from the reſt of the world by a preſent diſpenſation: but happy is he whoſe difference lieth in the root of his own nature, which changeth not in the midſt of the varieties of all conditions or diſpenſations.

A lamenting and pleading Postscript.

HOw deep and true a sense my spirit hath had of my *Fathers brethren and kindred according to the flesh*, (understand me aright:) both of their present sad estate and future misery: and what grief and lamentation it hath occasioned in me (it so nearly concerning them, of whom I once was, and whom I always have loved, and cannot but love tenderly still) the Lord only knoweth. Many times in the bitterness of my Soul have I complained in spirit, and said unto my God, O Lord God, Behold how sweetly and comfortably that stands in others, which thou hast so forcibly broken down in me! If it were of a true substantial enduring nature, why was it broken down in me? Was I not most naturally formed by thy hand into plainness, into simplicity, into a low, beleeving, broken, self-denying frame of spirit? and this nakedly hanging not upon any worth or excellency in it self, but upon the free dispensation of Life from thee of thine own meer grace, from which it came, and by which it hoped to live? O why did the severity of thy hand go forth so bitterly against it? How couldst thou find in thy heart to wound, trample upon, and destroy such a poor *worm and no man*? But if it was of a nature devoted to death and destruction, why is it suffered to stand in others? Hast thou snatched me as a brand out of the fire? O who can either endure to be so snatched out, or to undergo the scorching heat thereof, when it is once let loose upon his spirit? Or how shall I bear the miserable sight of so dreadful burnings, as must be kindled upon that which is left behind? When thou once kindlest thy fierce flames, ah what shall become of the poor dry stubble! It is easie

now

now to find a shelter, while thy wrath is at a distance: but alas what shall cover *poor naked Adam* (for the most religious man, which is not truly renewed, is no better) when thou walkest toward him with the bright piercing flames of thy Light! O how tender hath my spirit been of this seduced wandering generation! and yet thou hast made me only a stumbling block, and not an help unto them. Thou hast enforced me (among others) to give out a testimony against them, and several warnings unto them; but in such a way and after such a maner, as they could not possibly avoyd being offended. It is true, O Lord, Their spirits have not been able to withstand or acquit themselves (in thy sight) of what hath been testified against them: but yet the testimony hath not come forth so, as they might be able to consider and receive it. It hath been spoken in such strange dialects as they understood not, and also accompanied with such strange appearances, as might seem rather to become the spirit of *Satan* then of *God*. Yea Lord, Satan hath made such a noise, There have been such multitudes of his loud voyces and languages, that thy low still voyce might easily be drowned. No doubt, O Lord, but thou wilt be able to justifie thy self in all these things: but in the mean time what shall become of these poor Souls? Shall they always wander, and please themselves this little moment (which is their only time) with strange invented vanities, such as fooliſh vain man may admire and magnifie, but the Spirit of the Lord knoweth not, nor cannot own?

Dear Friends, Let me plead a little with you once more, from the tender love and pity of my Soul toward you. Do ye consider what hath been testified unto you, and from whence that testimony may come for ought ye know? Have ye dealt ingenuously with the Lord in this point? or rather have ye not watched for the halting of those

thoſe which have teſtified, that ſo ye might harden your ſpirits in your own invented ways? (For if ye could make good that they once were the Lords, yet they are not now his, unleſs the ſame ſpirit and light did again lead into them and quicken them. The Lord loveth *Spirit and Truth*, but regardeth not a dead form, although it were the very ſame wherein his Spirit once did live.) Can ye blame the Lord for preparing a ſtumbling block for you, or for ſuffering or giving you up to ſtumble, when ye your ſelves deſire it? Ye will have ſuch and ſuch Ordinances, paths and practiſes to be the ways of the Lord (every one according to his own imagination,) and cannot endure to hear any thing to the contrary: Ye will be judging and meaſuring the things of God, before ye have received either an eye, or light, or meaſure from him. But I injure you, ye have eyes, ye have light, ye have the reed of the Word, and can meaſure things aright by that. It is well, ſo it muſt be: But aſſuredly the Spirit of the Lord hath tryed and judged all your light, all your ways, all your knowledg and practiſes in Religion, and hath found them ſcanty in his ballance, ſcanty even of that *true light, nature and ſpirit* which he ſeeketh to worſhip him, and which he alone delighteth to be worſhipped in. Alas Sirs, ye may pleaſe your ſelves awhile, but ye cannot ſtand before the blaſting breath of the Lord, which bloweth upon all fleſh, and corrupteth it! If the Lord hath teſtified againſt your *duties*, as being things which he requireth not at your hands; againſt your *Ordinances and ways of worſhip*, as not being thoſe which he hath appointed; againſt your *graces*, as not being of the nature of his Life and Spirit; againſt your *evidences for Heaven* and happineſs, as not being ſuch as will endure his tryal and touchſtone; yea againſt your very *foundation*, as not being that which the Spirit of the Lord hath

layd, but which your own ſpirits by your own art and skill (a little heightened perhaps by your ſtudy of the Scriptures, and other exerciſes of your mind) have faſtened and built all upon: I ſay, If the Lord hath teſtified theſe things againſt you, the Lord will not fail to make them good; and whatſoever your confidences to the contrary are, ye ſhall not proſper in them.

O conſider this, if ye love your Souls! It is not a building upon Chriſt after the fleſh (it is not either *a beleeving* or *obeying* from any rational knowledg, from a knowledg of the underſtanding, though the heart and affections be never ſo much heated therewith, accompanying it never ſo vigorouſly) which will ſave any man: but *a building of a new nature upon the new nature of Chriſt.* It muſt be a building of a new nature, for Chriſt ſaveth *his building, his people, his ſeed, his Church:* and it muſt be built or founded upon the new nature of Chriſt; for Chriſt himſelf ſaveth *not according to the oldneſs of the letter, but according to the newneſs of the Spirit.* It is not the building of ſuch a new nature upon ſuch a Chriſt, as man will call ſo; but a building of the truth upon the Truth. Alas, what a poor imaginary thing is the Chriſt which many (if not moſt) apprehend! Chriſt conſiſteth not in the name, but in the nature and in the ſpirit of the thing. Now who knoweth the nature of Chriſt, or of that God which dwelleth in Chriſt? Who knoweth the nature of his Wiſdom, the nature of his Goodneſs, the nature of his Greatneſs, the nature of his Life, Spirit? &c. Who knoweth the nature of the Father which begat, or the nature of the Son who was begotten, either in his life or death? yea who knoweth himſelf? Man doth not build himſelf (I mean his own nature) upon Chriſt: but that which he calleth himſelf, upon that which he calleth Chriſt. Here will appear to be ſtrange work, when the Lord

Lord searcheth into it. Wonderful serious are men in their Religion, and yet (through the present thick darkness) little do they know what they do: Little do they perceive how they build an imagination upon an imagination. It is very true, that the *Apostles* had a true knowledg of *Christ*, and that they came forth with a true knowledg of *Christ*, and (it then being the time of light) that the Spirit of the Lord also went forth to quicken that knowledg (where it pleased him) unto the hearers: But what knowledg is it whereupon men now build? Who now knoweth the nature of *the Lords Anointed*, which is the *only Saviour*? Who looks into the *Scripture* now with a new eye? I am sure with an old eye no man can see the things of God. But I see the things of God (wilt thou perhaps say) therefore my eye is new. Nay but thou seest with the old eye, and therefore thy sight is not right: Take heed lest thou be convinced of this too late. O Lord God, that ever man should give scope to himself in so great vanity, as to lay the stress of his own eternal condition upon the motions of his own blind dark nature! But who doth thus? I acknowledg to thee O man, that in thy light and according to thy measure thou doest not so; but in the light of the Lord, and according to his measure, who doth not so? Tell me true, Doest not thou built upon Christ according to thy creaturely understanding? Ah, *Strait is the gate and narrow is the way that leadeth to life*, the fleshly reason, the fleshly understanding, the fleshly affections of man are too gross to enter into either. The first *Adam* (how excellent soever) cannot lay one stone in the building of God. The eye of mans purest Reason cannot read one line in the Book of God. O who knoweth God or his Christ, or his Worship, or any of his Truths? We have a great deal of knowledg in the

world, why all sorts know, but yet my spirit saith to all the sorts of this present generation, Who knoweth God? neither do I speak about the degree, but concerning the true nature of knowledg. The gross unclean spirit of man (which it still is, in the midst of all its Legal and Evangelical washings, cleanness and purity) cannot possibly see or be acquainted with the Lord. No unclean eye, no unclean heart, no unclean hand, &c. can ever come near the Life and Nature of God, but only that which is truly changed. Nothing can live in the presence of God, but that which hath the true Life and Nature of God in it, which groweth not from any institution or form of Religion, whereby so many appearing changes are wrought in the world, but from a true seed sown in the spirit of man by the Spirit of the Lord.

Now do not mistake me (and so still prejudice your selves) as if I went about to disswade you from duties, Ordinances, reading of the Scriptures, praying, hearing of the Word, and the like. No, I dissuade you not from any of these, (nor from any thing else wherein ye might truly serve and enjoy God, as I am sure ye might in the true knowledg, use and exercise of these:) but only from setting up dead things in stead of these (which become not the things themselves; by your esteeming or naming them so) that so ye might once come into a capacity of seeking and serving the Living God. I do not dehort you either from building up an house unto the Lord, or from worshipping him there with his worship: but this I testifie unto you that it will not be good for you to build up the Lords house with your materials, or to set up your worship there in stead of his, calling these the Lords, and forming them as like as possibly ye can unto that which was once the Lords, that so they may pass the better, both with your own spirits and

and before men. Certainly this will not be profitable for you in the upshot. It would have been better for you to have sunk down in that desolation which ye so despise, then to build with such hewen stones. They who are Christs, are taught by God to follow the Lamb whithersoever he goes: Out of fleshly *Egypt*, into the straitned *Wilderness*: Out of the Wilderness, in an entangled path to *Canaan*: Out of *Canaan*, into the *Wilderness* again. *The seed of Christ are not to set up a fleshly rest in Canaan*, but to be led again by the spirit into the Wilderness for the exercise of their spirits; and they are not afraid to follow the spirit, though out of *Canaan* and into the *Wilderness*. *I will lead them in paths they have not known*, saith *the holy one of Israel*. Vain foolish man will limit the holy one of *Israel*, and follow him only in such paths as he knows: but the true-spirited child (which understandeth the nature and truth of his guide) is not afraid to follow him any whither. And if ye can hear, consider this (I speak not at random) There are secret, pure, hidden paths of *Faith, Love, Worship, Obedience*, &c. wherein God and some of his people meet, know, own, and (after a sort) enjoy one another, even *in this Wilderness*, where their spirits are fed by him, and his life and nature embraced by them: But *the outward Court* is given to and prophaned by the Heathenish spirit of man, and can be no more fit for the spirit of the seed, until it be again measured and purified by the Spirit of the Lord. If ye do not plough with the right heifer, this will prove a very strange riddle to you: Yet it is never a whit the less true in it self, for your not apprehending or not relishing of it. Take heed of *fleshly wisdom*, take heed of *a fleshly line*, it is always dangerous, but then most of all, when it appeareth as if it were spiritual. Ye cannot measure any thing aright by a flesh-

ly understanding of the Scriptures. He that beginneth in the spirit, may turn aside and end in the flesh: But he that beginneth in the flesh, can never (in any part of that line) arrive at the spirit. This will one day appear as manifest, as it is now true, that he that beginneth not with a right spirit, with a right principle, with a right nature, cannot be right in any of his motions: Neither in his *Faith*, nor in his *Love*, nor in his *hopes*, *desires*, *prayers*, or any other part either of his outward or inward *worship* and *obedience*. *O that it would please God to uncover the truth, and to swallow up that thick vail, which lieth as yet upon all Nations!*

ERRATA.

Pag. 2. l. 19. r. a rising. p. 6. l. 8. for, a, r. or. l. 18. & 24. for, stay r. stage. p. 7. l. 3. *dele* an. p. 8. l. 20. *d.* or. p. 16. l. 9. *d.* of. p. 23. l. 4. r. throw. l. 34. r. plainly. p. 27. l. 3. for, in r. is. p. 28. l. 34. r. observing. p. 39. l. 23. r. dispense. l. 31. r. these. p. 42. l. 2. *d.* in l. 3. r. in them. p. 43. l. 5. r. power. l. 24. for, then r. there. p. 57. l. 32. r. Region. p. 58. l. 18. r. reacheth. p. 60. l. 32. add fourthly. p. 63. l. 19. r. if he could. l. 20. r. in this kind of nature. p. 109. l. 7. for, in r. is.

FINIS.

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